

NCFA

# NATIONAL ADOPTION CONFERENCE

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

JUNE 28-30, 2023



BUILDING THE

## GATEWAY

TO ADOPTION INNOVATION



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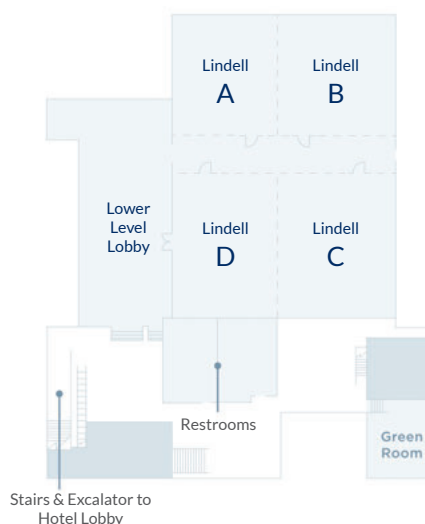
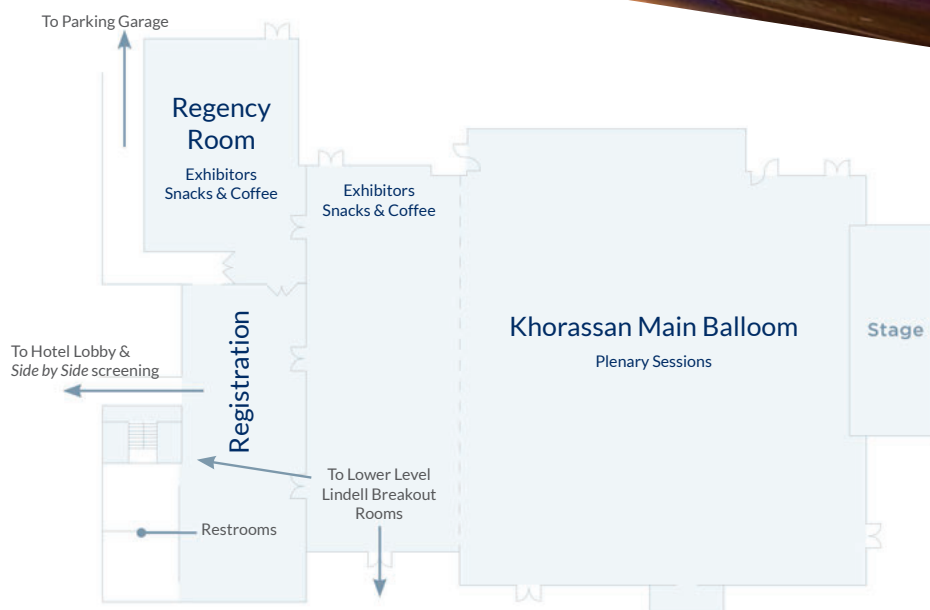
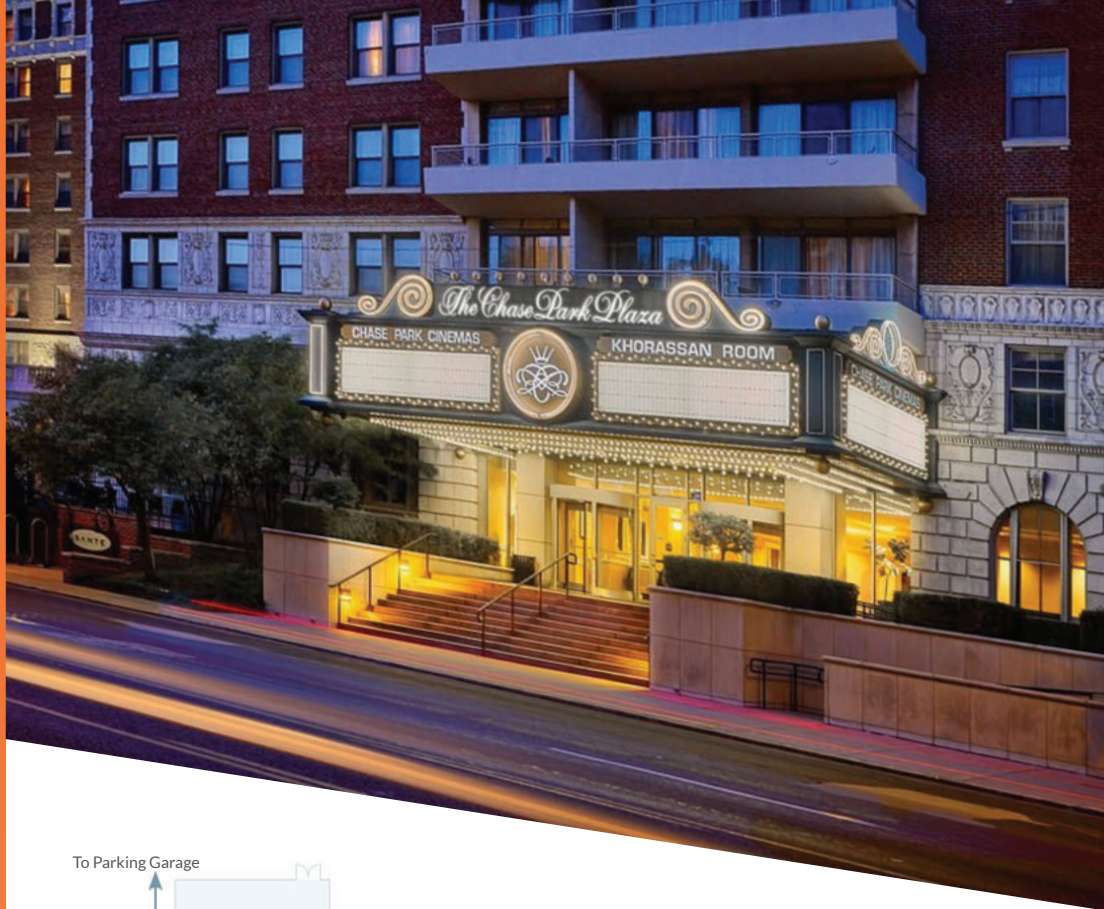
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**More than 65 years of experience.  
We provide lifelong support to adoptees and families.**

Learn more at [holtinternational.org/adoption](https://holtinternational.org/adoption)



# Welcome to St. Louis!

Thank you for joining us for this year's National Adoption Conference! The theme of this year's conference is *Building the Gateway to Adoption Innovation*, and you'll find that many of our sessions reflect that theme. Throughout the myriad challenges of the past few years, the adoption community has found its way with creativity, compassion, and a commitment to the best interests of every child. Our goal for this conference is to help you keep building on that, as together we work toward a world in which every child has a permanent, loving family, and everyone involved in adoption feels supported and empowered.

We're excited to hear from many individuals with personal experience during this year's conference. One of our morning plenaries will be a panel of adopted individuals, and the other a panel of birth parents, as we seek to elevate their voices and learn from them. We are also looking forward to a special screening of filmmaker Glenn Morey's *Side by Side Project*, with more than 100 personal narratives reflecting 65 years of intercountry adoption from South Korea.

There's a special treat following Thursday's sessions, made possible by the generosity of the St. Louis Cardinals! We'll load up the buses and head for Busch Stadium to see the Cardinals take on the reigning World Series champion Houston Astros. This will be an opportunity to relax and enjoy a bit of our host city.

The adoption community is truly at its strongest when we collaborate, learning from and leaning on one another, and I hope you'll take some time throughout the next few days to connect with one another and the NCFA staff and board who are here. We are glad to be a resource for any challenges you may be facing in your work.

Finally, I want to offer my thanks to all of our speakers for sharing their time and expertise, the volunteers who are helping everything to run smoothly, our sponsors and exhibitors for helping make this conference possible – and to *you*, for the vital work that you do.

Sincerely,



Ryan Hanlon  
President and CEO







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## WE'RE TAKING YOU OUT TO THE BALLGAME!

300 free tickets are available, first-come,first-serve, for all Conference registrants for Thursday night's St. Louis Cardinal's game against the 2022 World Series Champion Houston Astros!

Pick up your ticket in person, one per registrant, at the NCFA information table starting at 8:00am on Thursday.

The game starts at 6:15pm.



Buses will depart in two rounds starting at 5:15pm. Buses will leave the stadium to return to the hotel in two rounds starting at 8:00pm.

*If you need to return at a different time, the hotel is just a short Uber ride from downtown.*



# Continuing Education Credits

Social workers participating in this conference can receive up to 11 continuing education credits, with opportunities to receive up to 3.5 cultural competency CE, 5.5 ethics CE, and 5 clinical CE, depending on which sessions are selected.

**This event does not offer credit for social workers licensed in the state of New Jersey.** The state of New Jersey does not recognize ASWB ACE continuing education provider level approval. National Council For Adoption is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Social Work as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed social workers #SW-0681.

In order to receive continuing education credit, attendees must participate in the entirety of a live in-person session, scan in and out of the session to have their attendance verified and complete a course and overall conference evaluation. Session and overall conference evaluations must be completed through the Conference app or website. Each evaluation will become available in the app once the session has finished. The overall conference evaluation will be available at the conclusion of the conference. At the conclusion of the conference, attendees will receive an email with a link to finish any incomplete evaluations through the app or a desktop browser.

Once all required evaluations are completed, attendees will receive an email, to the email address provided at registration,

with a [link to download](#) their conference continuing education certificate of credit. **Please note:** The certificate will only be available for download through August 31st. You cannot go back to retrieve it through your email after that date.

For questions, concerns or to request special accommodations, please stop by the information desk for assistance.

National Council For Adoption, #1804, is approved as an ACE provider to offer social work continuing education by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Approved Continuing Education (ACE) program. Regulatory boards are the final authority on courses accepted for continuing education credit. ACE provider approval period: 04/13/2023 – 04/13/2026.

## CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE

At the conclusion of the conference, attendees not receiving a CE or NY contact hours certificate will automatically receive an email with a link to download their certificate of attendance for all sessions that they scanned into. **Please note:** Unlike the CE certificate, this certificate will not generate the number of hours per session, but will provide a placeholder for you to complete that information. The certificate will only be available for download through August 31st. You cannot go back to retrieve it through your email at a later date.

# WiFi & The Conference App

( 1 )

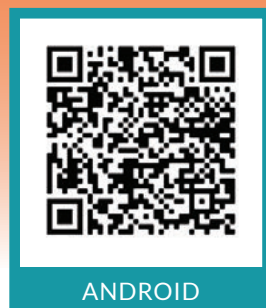
Download the free **Cvent Events** app. Find it in your app store by scanning the Apple or Android QR code.



APPLE

( 2 )

Search for **National Adoption Conference** in the top search bar of the Cvent Events app.



ANDROID

( 3 )

Log in to connect with other attendees and complete the **CE or attendance certificate requirements**.

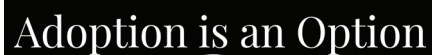
Need Wifi? Copper Sponsor  
Parentfinder.com has you covered!

Network: Chase\_Meeting\_Rooms  
Password: NCFA2023



# Conference Sponsors

## GOLD SPONSOR

The logo for "Adoption is an Option" features the text "Adoption is an Option" in a white serif font, with the word "is" underlined, set against a solid black rectangular background.

**ADOPTION IS AN OPTION** // Executive Directors Dinner Sponsor

[adoptionisanoption.com](http://adoptionisanoption.com) | [iamthatkid.com](http://iamthatkid.com)

Adoption is an Option teaches others how it works by sharing incredible stories from those who've placed children for adoption and shares the stories from those who have been adopted through "I am that Kid".

*Learn more about us in our ad on page 16!*

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[davethomasfoundation.org](http://davethomasfoundation.org)

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption is a national nonprofit public charity dedicated to finding permanent homes for the more than 140,000 children waiting in North America's foster care systems. Created by Wendy's® founder Dave Thomas who was adopted, the Foundation implements evidence-based, results-driven national service programs, foster care adoption awareness campaigns and innovative grantmaking.

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[adoptioncenterofillinois.org](http://adoptioncenterofillinois.org)

Since 1988 we have supported our mission of "Helping Children Through Adoption" by: finding permanent, loving adoptive families for children, regardless of the background or health of the child; safeguarding the best interests and welfare of children placed in our care; and advancing the practice and understanding of adoption.

Licensed in Illinois and Hague Accredited since 2007, we offer comprehensive services for both domestic and international adoption.



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We believe in building stronger families. Our low-rate adoption loans are great for both international and domestic adoption. Use the funds for expenses such as agency, court, and lawyer fees, a home study, or travel costs. Since this program's origination, we have been recognized by state representatives and adoption-supporting organizations like the Dave Thomas Adoption Foundation and the National Council For Adoption.

*\* Find these sponsors in the exhibitor hall*



**FAMILY CONNECTIONS, INC.** \* // Technology Sponsor

[adoptfamilyconnections.org](http://adoptfamilyconnections.org)

Family Connections, Inc., is a not-for-profit, New York State authorized private adoption agency who has been caring for families through domestic and international adoption since 1994. We are dedicated to supporting birth parents, adoptive parents, and children touched by adoption throughout the life-long journey of adoption.



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**HAWLEY & ASSOCIATES, A GALLAGHER COMPANY** \* // Baseball Bus Sponsor

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Hawley & Associates, an Arthur J Gallagher company, was founded in 2005 exclusively to provide specialized insurance services for adoption, foster care and child welfare agencies. Our goal is to bring “excellence” in insurance to social service agencies around the world. Understanding your insurance needs, finding the “right” coverage to protect your organization, at the most affordable price, is our sincere desire.



**HOLT INTERNATIONAL** \* // Program Sponsor

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For more than 65 years, Holt International has worked toward a world where every child has a stable, loving home. Around the world, we care for orphaned and vulnerable children, strengthen families at risk of separation and help children join families through in-country or international adoption. For every child and family united through adoption, we provide lifelong support and resources.



**NEW BEGINNINGS ADOPTION & FAMILY SERVICES** \* // Technology Sponsor

[newbeginningsadoptions.org](http://newbeginningsadoptions.org)

New Beginnings Adoption and Family Services is a non-profit Adoption and Family Service that provides an abortion alternative for birth mothers and offers adoption opportunities for those who seek parenthood. New Beginnings provides both domestic and international adoption opportunities, as well as home study services.



**SOCIAL CURRENT** \* // Technology Sponsor

[social-current.org](http://social-current.org)

Born out of the merger of the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities and the Council on Accreditation, Social Current is the premier partner and service provider to human and social service organizations. We offer a range of services and opportunities including: COA Accreditation, Consulting and Learning, Engagement Packages, and Policy and Advocacy. Join our network of 1,800+ organizations!



**SPENCE-CHAPIN SERVICES TO FAMILIES & CHILDREN** \* // Lunch Sponsor

[spence-chapin.org](http://spence-chapin.org)

Spence-Chapin is a full-service adoption agency with over 100 years of experience providing quality services. Spence-Chapin currently offers the following programs and services: domestic infant adoption, international adoption, special needs adoption, home study services, options counseling, interim care services, mentorship, community events, counseling, parent trainings, education workshops, and humanitarian aid to children living in institutions around the world. Spence-Chapin envisions a world where adoption is a celebrated choice, every child belongs, and all families are embraced.



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Established in 1992, CCAI has found loving homes for more than 13,250 orphans from seven countries through adoption, assisted over 100,000 orphans left behind in the orphanage through charity outreach, and supported thousands of adoptees and their families through post adoption services.



**PARENTFINDER \*** // WiFi Sponsor

[parentfinder.com](http://parentfinder.com)

Parentfinder's methods of adoption profile design and marketing leads to more matches than any other profile service in domestic infant adoption. Adoption professionals can text their parent's profiles to expecting women in seconds making follow up easy and seamless. Our waiting families plugin displays your families on your website with one click of a mouse. Smart, successful, Parentfinder, the perfect companion to your outreach program.



**SYNERGI** // Breakfast Sponsor

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Synergi is an industry leader in identifying and processing business tax credits and incentives, and they are the largest privately held tax credit processing business in the U.S. It is operated by tax credit industry veterans with more than 40 years of experience. Synergi's team of professionals offers premium client service, comprehensive data analysis, and years of experience in the industry — the combination of which gives them the ability to identify tax credit opportunities, such as the Employee Retention Tax Credit, for their clients.

## LANYARD SPONSOR



**RG ADOPTION CONSULTING \***

[rgadoptionconsulting.com](http://rgadoptionconsulting.com)

Our mission is to guide, support, and educate open-minded, hopeful parents to fulfill their dream of becoming a family through domestic adoption while providing ethical resources and a heart-centered adoption community.

NCFA is grateful for the generous support of our 2023 Conference sponsors!

We encourage you to learn more about them through the Conference app, meet them in the exhibit hall, and consider how you can partner with them in your work.

# Agenda

The NCFA Conference team has carefully selected session topics and speakers that address both the challenges and opportunities in adoption services today. Our goal is for conference attendees to expand their skills, deepen their understanding of core issues in adoption, and leave with a strengthened resolve to help every member of the adoption community thrive.

Slides and handouts that speakers have opted to make publicly available will be distributed to attendees via email within 30 days after the conference.

Special thanks to our  
Technology Sponsors!

Thank you to our Bronze Sponsors  
**New Beginnings Adoption & Family  
Services, Family Connections, and Social  
Current** for making the A/V support possible  
for the breakout sessions.

## Wednesday, June 28



### WELCOME & OPENING PLENARY SESSION



#### THE LANGUAGE OF TRAUMA

Heather T. Forbes, LCSW

Trauma can impact the way adopted children perceive the world and how they interpret words and conversations. This often creates a severe disconnect between adoptive parents and their adopted children. In this keynote, Heather will discuss and demonstrate how what we say and how we deliver our communication often gets wildly misinterpreted by children who have been impacted by negative life experiences. Learning to “speak trauma” can make the difference in how trust can be built and how well adoptive parents are able to create emotional safety with their adopted children. In turn, this becomes the building block for decreasing unsafe behaviors in the home. Join Heather for this authentic and relatable keynote. Leave with a deeper understanding of how to formulate effective responses to deescalate children and how to create a home environment that begins the life-long journey of healing with our children.

WED 1:00–2:15 PM

ROOM // KHORASSAN

TRACK // CLINICAL

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT

### SNACK BREAK WITH EXHIBITORS



Enjoy refreshments and meet our exhibitors! Thank you to Bronze Sponsor **Adoption Center of Illinois** for sponsoring today's snacks and beverages.

The Exhibit Hall is located just outside of Khorassan ballroom.

WED 2:15–2:45 PM

ROOM // EXHIBIT HALL



# Seen: A JOURNEY

To birth mothers healing,  
connecting, and thriving

For decades, communities have provided incredible support and care through parenting classes and after-abortion healing programs, but what about Birth Mothers who have placed children for adoption?

How can we help support and care for her?



You are the God  
who sees me.  
*genesis 16:13*

There's a **new**, unique curriculum for you to journey with women who have placed children for adoption, created by

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**LOVE**  
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[www.NewBeginningsAdoptions.org](http://www.NewBeginningsAdoptions.org)

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Adoption Center of Illinois  
at Family Resource Center

[www.adoptioncenterofillinois.org](http://www.adoptioncenterofillinois.org)

## BREAKOUT SESSIONS



### EQUIPPING TRANSRACIAL ADOPTIVE PARENTS TO CULTIVATE POSITIVE RACIAL IDENTITY

*Elizabeth Dobson, MA and Jenna L. Jebitsch, PsyD, LPC*

This workshop is focused on strategies to equip transracial adoptive parents to raise their children with confidence in their racial identity and with an emotionally healthy sense of self. The value of fostering a child's emotional and psychological needs as it relates to their racial identity will be addressed along with strategies at the organizational level that should be considered to support these families. The concepts shared are based on research, Liz Dobson's personal experience as an adoptee of color raised in an all-white family, and Dr. Jenna Jebitsch's years of clinical experience as a child and family therapist.



WED 2:45–3:45 PM

ROOM // LINDELL A

TRACK // CULTURAL  
COMPETENCY AND ETHICS

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT



### ETHICS AND CHALLENGES IN POST-PLACEMENT BIRTH PARENT CARE

*Alexis Eyler*

Post-placement care is critical for birth parents, not only to provide them the resources they need to heal, but because birth parents who struggle with unresolved or ambiguous grief and trauma carry that burden into the relationships they navigate going forward as part of their open adoption plans, impacting both adoptive parents and adoptees. We discuss what optimal care can look like for birth parents, why caring for birth parents needs to be built into every adoption, how that care (or lack thereof) affects adoptive parenting practices, and how providing sustained ongoing care to birth parents is a critical piece in ethical adoption.

WED 2:45–3:45 PM

ROOM // LINDELL B

TRACK // CARING AND  
CONNECTION

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT



### THE UNSPOKEN TRAUMA: LOSS

*Debbie Riley, LCMFT*

Loss is a significant trauma that is too often unspoken or minimized to youth. And yet, for children to make new attachments, they must be supported in grieving lost and broken attachments. This workshop explores the unique losses experienced by children, including how losses affect their development, psychological tasks of grief work, and healing therapies for children and teens. Discussion will include how professionals can work with parents to understand how their children are experiencing the ambiguities and process of foster care/adoption. Effective interventions for opening communication with children and strengthening transitions and attachment to new families will be included.

WED 2:45–3:45 PM

ROOM // LINDELL C

TRACK // CLINICAL

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT





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**AAAA**  
Academy of Adoption &  
Assisted Reproduction Attorneys

**GUIDE ADVOCATE PROTECT**

**[www.adoptionART.org](http://www.adoptionART.org)**

*We are attorneys helping to build secure families through adoption and assisted reproduction.*



### UNDERSTANDING SUBSIDIES: AN OVERVIEW OF FEDERAL AND STATE ADOPTION ASSISTANCE

*Ryan Hanlon, PhD, LMSW, Genie  
Gillespie, JD, and Jennifer Kelly, MS*



This session will offer a general overview of adoption assistance and subsidies at the Federal and State level. The speakers will discuss interstate issues; eligibility concerns; common mistakes; and the process for applying for non-ward subsidies. This content is for adoption professionals with little to no knowledge on subsidies. The information being shared in this presentation is built from a working group of NCFA, AAAA, and NACAC.

WED 2:45–3:45 PM

ROOM // LINDELL D

TRACK // CARING AND  
CONNECTION

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT

## FREE TIME

Enjoy 30 minutes of free time before our next breakout sessions resume. Visit page 34 of this program for details on our Exhibitor bingo card game.

WED 3:45–4:15 PM

## BREAKOUT SESSIONS



### BLOCKED CARE: HELPING PARENTS REGAIN COMPASSION

*Melissa Corkum*

When a child is exposed to early adversity, their brain may activate a premature defense mechanism putting them in a chronic state of survival, which can result in blocked trust. When a parent continually makes attempts to connect and there is no reciprocity from the child, this can result in a corresponding activation of the parent's defense system, resulting in blocked care. In this presentation, learn to recognize the ten signs of blocked care, four types of blocked care, and what parents need to regain compassion.

WED 4:15–5:15 PM

ROOM // LINDELL A

TRACK // CLINICAL

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT



### SUPPORTING ADOPTEES IN EARLY ADULTHOOD

*Christine Tangel, LCSW and Jessica Luciere*

The answers to big questions of “who am I?”, “what do I believe?” and “how do others see me?” are complex for all people in their late teens through their 20s. Adoptees deserve thoughtful and supportive services as they navigate making meaning of their identities, separate from their families, both adoptive and birth/first families. This presentation will look at how complex identity formation is and how to support the needs of adoptees during ‘emerging adulthood’ through a clinical and peer support lens. Attendees will learn tools to incorporate into their clinical practice, as well as building meaningful programming for adoptees.

WED 4:15–5:15 PM

ROOM // LINDELL B

TRACK // CLINICAL

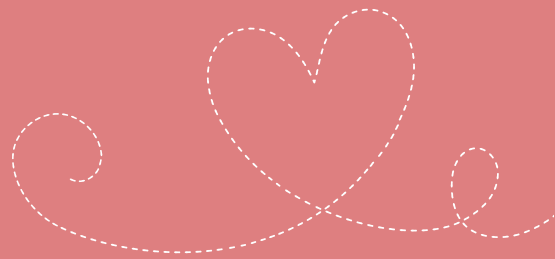
SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT





# Seen: A JOURNEY

To birth mothers healing,  
connecting, and thriving



For decades, communities have provided  
incredible support and care through parenting  
classes and after-abortion healing programs,  
but what about Birth Mothers who have placed  
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How can we help support and care for her?



There's a **new**, unique  
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journey with women who  
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adoption, created by

abiding  
**LOVE**  
CHARITIES

You are the God  
who sees me.

*genesis* 16:13



[abidinglovecharities.org](http://abidinglovecharities.org)



## PREVENTING DISRUPTION AND DISSOLUTION: RELATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR ADOPTIVE PARENTS

*Daniel Nehrbass, PhD*

In this presentation, Dr. Nehrbass presents nine relational strategies for foster and adoptive parents who feel stuck. "Time out" only takes parents so far. Adoption professionals will learn to help parents "get unstuck". The speaker will review a simple model to share with parents who feel trapped or at the end of their rope. Adoption professionals can quickly memorize and learn to illustrate these strategies to the families they counsel and will have an opportunity to practice these skills through group discussion.

WED 4:15–5:15 PM

ROOM // LINDELL C

TRACK // CARING AND  
CONNECTION

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT



## FUNDRAISING BASICS TO SUPPORT ADOPTION AGENCIES

*Kevin Qualls, MDiv*

Fundraising is the key to agency growth at a healthy pace and pushing through seasons when placements are down. In this presentation, the speaker will discuss key principles for fundraising, applicable to both small agencies and to larger agencies with a full development team. Don't miss this hands-on, practical workshop from an adoption agency leader that started with \$50k in fundraising and has grown to \$2 million in six years.

WED 4:15–5:15 PM

ROOM // LINDELL D

TRACK // CARING AND  
CONNECTION

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS SOCIAL HOUR & DINNER

Adoption  
is an  
Option

Open to executive directors (or other agency leadership designee) who reserved a ticket in advance. Thank you to **Adoption is an Option** for sponsoring this evening's dinner.

### All other attendees:

Enjoy dinner on your own as you explore the diverse culinary cuisine offered throughout the area. Scan the QR code or visit the link on the app homepage for *St. Louis Magazine's* guide to Central West End dining.



DINING GUIDE

WED 6:00–9:00 PM

ROOM // EMPIRE  
(FROM THE MAIN HOTEL  
LOBBY, THE EMPIRE ROOM IS  
LOCATED PAST THE TENDER-  
LOIN ROOM, ON THE LEFT)

## In Case You Missed It!

We've released Part Two of the Profiles in Adoption Research Project—a nationwide study of the experiences of adoptive parents, birth parents, and adopted individuals. Read the reports at [adoptioncouncil.org/profiles](http://adoptioncouncil.org/profiles)



# Adoption is an Option

Where we learn the truth from  
those who've walked ahead.



i am  
that kid

I Am That Kid is a movement  
amplifying the life-changing stories  
of incredible people who were  
adopted as kids.

[iamthatkid.com](http://iamthatkid.com)



Opt Institute is a non-profit research  
foundation and think tank dedicated  
to improving access to and support  
for private infant adoption.

[optinstitute.org](http://optinstitute.org)



*"If I could tell the son who I placed for  
adoption one thing...I'd tell him that I  
only wanted to give him a chance at a  
life I couldn't give him. I've always  
loved him."*

Jenni

# Thursday, June 29



## BREAKFAST



Thank you to CCAI for sponsoring today's coffee and breakfast.

**8 AM—Baseball Game & Bus Ticket Pickup begins at the NCFA Info Table!**

TH 8:00–9:00 AM

ROOM // EXHIBIT HALL



## MORNING PLENARY SESSION



### LEARNING FROM ADOPTEES: INCORPORATING ADOPTEES' VOICES INTO PRACTICE

*Host: Michelle Li*

*Panelists: Ramya Gruneisen, MS,  
Mike Thorne, and Melissa Corkum*

This session is a panel-discussion intended to elevate adopted individuals' voices, whom often do not have opportunities to share their stories and perspectives. This will be a Q&A style panel, and adoptees will be asked about their stories and how they processed their adoption experience over the years. Discussion will be centered around strategies for incorporating adoptee voices and perspectives into practice, as well as important ethical considerations for post adoption supports and navigating birth family relationships.



TH 9:00–10:15 AM

ROOM // KHORASSAN

TRACK // CULTURAL  
COMPETENCY AND ETHICS

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT

## BREAKOUT SESSIONS



### BUILDING THE GATEWAY TO ADOPTION COMPETENCY

*Lisa Maynard, LMSW, ACSW, TCTSY-F*

Children who are adopted, in foster care, kinship care, or guardianship placements experience elevated risks for developmental, physical, emotional, and behavioral challenges because of their traumatic life experiences and compromised beginnings. These mental health and developmental needs can often go beyond adoption professionals' skills and training. This session will cover the importance of adoption competency in mental health and child welfare, and will demonstrate skills from the National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative (NTI). The speakers will discuss how different sites from across the US have utilized NTI in their training milieu to build competency and promote permanency and well-being for children and families.

TH 10:30–12:00 PM

ROOM // LINDELL A

TRACK // CARING AND  
CONNECTION

SOCIAL WORK CE //  
1.5 CREDITS

# A better cash management solution for your expectant mothers.

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## BIRTH PARENT GRIEF: ANALYSIS OF PRESENT LITERATURE AND APPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

*Meshan Lehmann, LCSW-C*

Birth mothers have long been the forgotten population within the adoption constellation. Adoption professionals serving first-families are not equipped with best practices and recommendations for counseling birth parents, whether immediately after placement or years down the road. This presentation will highlight the scarcity of available resources for therapists, and outline modalities for disenfranchised and ambiguous loss. The speaker will break down existing grief resources that share themes with adoption trauma and loss, while discussing their limitations, and suggest specific therapeutic interventions for birth parent healing post-relinquishment.

TH 10:30–12:00 PM

ROOM // LINDELL B

TRACK // CULTURAL COMPETENCY AND ETHICS

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1.5 CREDITS



## INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION AND USCIS

*Kelley Miller, Dawn L. Hart, Amy Bourn, and Jessica Madrid*

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will provide updates on intercountry adoption-related processing topics of interest and their adoption-related engagement efforts. This panel includes representatives from USCIS Field Operations Directorate (FOD) and National Benefits Center (NBC). Panelists will address questions and feedback provided in advance by conference attendees and discuss plans for future enhancements.

TH 10:30–12:00 PM

ROOM // LINDELL C/D

TRACK // CARING AND CONNECTION

PLEASE NOTE THIS SESSION DOES NOT OFFER CE CREDIT



## NETWORKING LUNCH



Enjoy a plated lunch and connect with others at your table. Discussion prompts will be provided, but you are free to select your own topics and use the time to get to know one another better and share about your work.

Have a special dietary need? Dietary cards are distributed at the registration check-in desk. Please display at your place setting during this seated lunch for your server.

Thank you to **Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption** for sponsoring today's lunch.

TH 12:15–1:30 PM

ROOM // KHORASSAN

*Continue the Conversation!*

Stay connected with other conference attendees using the Conference app. See page three for details.



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## BREAKOUT SESSIONS



### **RUPTURES AND REPAIRS: ADDRESSING ATTACHMENT PATTERNS IN CAREGIVERS**

*L. Michelle Codington, LMFT, RPT-S, CFTP*

Examining and addressing caregiver attachments patterns can be even more important than addressing children's difficult behaviors. Even minor attachment disruptions can have a tremendous impact on how one parents a foster/adoptive child. This presentation will provide strategies for supporting caregivers as they reflect on their own experience, and steps caregivers can take to heal their own attachment histories and be more fully attuned to their foster/adopted children. Speakers will discuss how caregiver attachment histories impact a parent's ability to attune to their child's needs in difficult moments, and ways in which caregivers can repair ruptures in their relationships with their children.

TH 1:45–2:45 PM

ROOM // LINDELL A

TRACK // CLINICAL

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT



### **BIRTH PARENT EXPERIENCES: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS**

*Ryan Hanlon, PhD, LMSW, Laura Bruder, and Ashley Boschen, LPC*

This session will share the findings from research on birth parent experiences in the United States. Over 1,100 birth mothers and more than 200 birth fathers completed an extensive survey about their experiences; additionally, three in-depth focus groups were conducted to learn more from birth mothers about their views toward an adoptive placement. The speakers will discuss practice and policy implications from their research findings and suggest future areas of birth parent research.

TH 1:45–2:45 PM

ROOM // LINDELL B

TRACK // CULTURAL COMPETENCY AND ETHICS

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT



### **INHERENTLY CONNECTED: RETHINKING ADOPTION PRE & POST SUPPORT USING A FAMILY SYSTEMS LENS**

*Jana Hunsley, PhD, LCSW*

The focus of most pre- and post-adoption support programs is on the adopted child and, more specifically, the potential realities of complex developmental trauma. At their best, services offer strategies for improving behavior by building a secure parent-child relationship and healing from early stressful environments. But are these services really meeting the needs of adoptive families? What about parents' stress or hopelessness? Siblings' invisibility or parentification? Or the chaotic family environment the whole family is experiencing? This presentation offers a more realistic depiction of families' needs and a more effective solution to successfully supporting adoptive families.

TH 1:45–2:45 PM

ROOM // LINDELL C/D

TRACK // CARING AND CONNECTION

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT





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For Caregivers and Professionals

By

Dr. Joseph Crumbley



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## BREAKOUT SESSIONS



### **ADOPTION PREPARATION, SUPPORT, AND PRESERVATION FOR SPECIAL NEEDS AND MEDICALLY COMPLEX PLACEMENTS**

*Katie Gattone, MSW and Kathy Santangelo*

The presentation will cover strategies for addressing the needs of special needs and medically complex placements and how to prepare and support these families through their adoption. Speakers will discuss benefits of a longer home study assessment with live/virtual home study classes in a group setting and how to gear online trainings to each family. We will discuss the importance of reflection assignments, mentorship options, and profile review by adoption counselors during the home study process. We will address supporting clients in referral review, period of waiting and the need for social outlets to create a sense of community that carries beyond placement.



TH 3:00–4:30 PM

ROOM // LINDELL B

TRACK // CLINICAL

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1.5 CREDITS



### **BIRTH SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS: PRESERVING CONNECTIONS AND NAVIGATING COMPLEXITIES**

*Monica Baker, MSW and Amy Silverman, LMSW*

In adoption, sibling connections come in many forms. Adoptees often report that the relationship with their birth siblings is one of the most important connections to their biological roots. This session will explore the complexities of siblings in adoption. We will discuss the importance of and challenges to preserving connections between birth siblings, supporting families as they navigate different degrees of open adoptions within the same adoptive family, and ways to help birth and adoptive families talk with children about their biological siblings who are being raised outside of their family.



TH 3:00–4:30 PM

ROOM // LINDELL C/D

TRACK // CARING AND CONNECTION

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1.5 CREDITS



### **SIDE BY SIDE: OUT OF A SOUTH KOREAN ORPHANAGE AND INTO THE WORLD**

*Glenn Morey and Kim Warner-Hudy, LCSW*

Filmmaker, Glenn Morey, will screen a short documentary version of the award-winning and widely distributed Side by Side project — 100 individual narratives of abandonment, relinquishment, orphanages, aging out, and 65+ years of inter-country adoption from South Korea, created over the last eight years — and will briefly speak to the project's scope, intention, and methodology. He will be joined by Kim Warner-Hudy, LCSW, to discuss the impact of Side by Side on adoptees and adoptive families; its role in mental healthcare and social work; and its use in education, training, and scholarly research. Q&A will follow.



TH 3:00–4:30 PM

ROOM // CHASE PARK PLAZA CINEMA (SEE INSIDE COVER FOR MAP)

TRACK // CULTURAL COMPETENCY AND ETHICS

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1.5 CREDITS





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## BASEBALL PRE-GAME RECEPTION

Enjoy baseball-themed food and drink before the buses take us to Busch stadium for a *free* Cardinals baseball game!

## CARDINALS BASEBALL GAME

We have 300 free tickets available, first-come, first-serve, for Conference registrants to watch the St. Louis Cardinals take on the 2022 World Series Champion Houston Astros! Pick up your ticket at the NCFA information table starting at 8:00am on Thursday. See the schedule in the Conference app or page two of this program for more details.

Buses will depart in two rounds starting at 5:15pm. Buses will leave the stadium to return to the hotel in two rounds starting at 8:00pm. The second round of buses will be traffic dependent, but we expect it to be about 45 minutes later. Bus transportation is made possible by the generous support of Bronze Sponsor **Hawley & Associates**, a Gallagher company.

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**Not a baseball fan? We've got you covered!** We have extra space on the buses to provide you with transportation to the stadium area, with the Gateway Arch and other downtown landmarks, restaurants, and nightlife nearby. You can pick up your bus only ticket at the NCFA information table.



4:30–5:15 PM

RECEPTION // EXHIBIT HALL

5:15 PM

FIRST ROUND OF BUSES  
DEPART FOR BUSCH  
STADIUM, DOWNTOWN  
ST. LOUIS

6:15 PM

BASEBALL GAME BEGINS

8:00 PM

FIRST ROUND OF BUSES  
DEPART STADIUM TO RETURN  
TO CONFERENCE HOTEL

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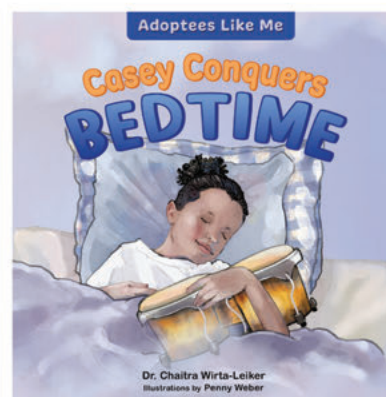
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# Friday, June 30



## BREAKFAST



Enjoy breakfast while mingling in our exhibitor hall. Thank you to **Synergi** for sponsoring today's breakfast.

FRI 8:00–9:00 AM

ROOM // EXHIBIT HALL

## MORNING PLENARY SESSION



### BIRTH MOTHER PERSPECTIVES: THE JOURNEY OF OPENNESS OVER THE YEARS

*Host: Renee Alexander, PhD  
Panelists: Janelle Ison, MBA,  
Kelsey Vander Vliet Ranyard, and  
Mercedes O'Bryant-Gruzeski*



This session is a panel discussion intended to elevate the voices of birth parents, whom often do not have opportunities to share their stories and perspectives. This will be a Q&A style panel, and birth parents will be asked about their stories and how they processed their experience over the years. Discussion will be centered around important ethical considerations for birth parent supports and navigating open adoption.

FRI 9:00–10:15 AM

ROOM // KHORASSAN

TRACK // CULTURAL  
COMPETENCY AND ETHICS

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT

## BREAKOUT SESSIONS



### MAINTAINING BIRTH FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS POSTPLACEMENT

*Donna Pope, MS, MEd, ACMHC, RTT and Jodi Grizzle, LCSW*

Open communication after adoption and foster care placements is not only the norm, but it is inevitable. Most agencies support openness, clients want it, and multiple sources enable biological relatives to locate and contact each other. This workshop will explore the value and challenges of post placement communication and reunification. The speakers will explore open communication from the perspective of the child, biological parents, as well as the adoptive and foster parents. This session will also examine the elements of a healthy communication and relationship, and will explore the requirements and availability of tools that can facilitate these connections.



FRI 10:30–11:30 AM

ROOM // LINDELL A

TRACK // CULTURAL  
COMPETENCY AND ETHICS

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT



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### SELF-COMPASSION: SILENCING THE INNER CRITIC

*Robin Hitt, RN*

This interactive workshop is designed to help therapists and social workers be better equipped to support the adoption community. As the adoption community focuses more on expanding parental skillsets, this presentation will highlight ways for therapists and social workers to recognize and guide adoptive parents through the challenges they face. We will review how adoptive parents are uniquely triggered by shame, self-doubt, and feelings of unworthiness. We will identify how to help them develop shame resilience. In particular, we will explore how to help adoptive parents cultivate a practice of self-compassion as one of the most effective remedies to shame. When the adoptive parent galvanizes this learning, they are better equipped to partner with their adoptees instead of engaging in power struggles.

FRI 10:30–11:30 AM

ROOM // LINDELL B

TRACK // CARING AND CONNECTION

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT



### PARENTAL POSTADOPTION DEPRESSION: REMIND, REVIEW, AND REFRESH

*Karen Foli, PhD, RN, ANEF, FAAN*

"Remind, review, and refresh" offers a renewed awareness of parental post-adoption depression. In this presentation, the speaker will review the current understanding of post-adoption depression and refresh the literature that has been published in the last five years. Application of theoretical concepts, such as parental expectations, will be used to provide concrete interventions to pre-adoptive and post-adoptive parents.

FRI 10:30–11:30 AM

ROOM // LINDELL C/D

TRACK // CLINICAL

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT

## BREAKOUT SESSIONS



### STREAMLINING INITIATIVES FOR CHILD WELLBEING USING AN EXECUTIVE ACCELERATOR MODEL

*Elisabeth S. Wilson, MS and Kiki Huckaby, MEd*

This workshop will focus on how an Executive Accelerator model can enable child welfare professionals to create cultural change by leveraging key leadership skills and uplifting front-line expertise. Explore how this model works through a real-world example of The North Dakota Executive Accelerator that brought educators and child welfare workers together to create streamlined systems that benefit the wellbeing of children and the local community. This session will end with an open discussion of how this model can be replicated in other communities to spark sustainable change.

FRI 11:45–1:00 PM

ROOM // LINDELL A

TRACK // CARING AND CONNECTION

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT







**Robin Hitt ACC, CDWF**

Author, Speaker, Life Coach,  
Certified Daring Way™ Facilitator

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## THE CONTINUED IMPACT OF UNREGULATED DOMESTIC INFANT ADOPTION

*Celeste Liversidge, JD, Kelsey Vander Vliet Ranyard, and Katie Monroe, MSW*



While the internet has expanded opportunities and reach for adoption professionals, it has also increased the risk of exploitation by unlicensed adoption providers. The prevalence of self-matching via social media also raises new challenges for adoption professionals when approached to “simply handle the paperwork”. In this presentation, we will address how adoption professionals can use technology to modernize services and collaborate with one another, without compromising ethical standards. We will discuss steps needed to protect our organizations from liability when working with adoption brokers and self-matches, as well as actions lawmakers and law enforcement should take to enforce existing laws and create new ones.

FRI 11:45–1:00 PM

ROOM // LINDELL B

TRACK // CULTURAL COMPETENCY AND ETHICS

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT



## INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTIONS AND THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

*Michelle Bernier-Toth, MA*

This presentation will review of the Department of State’s role and mission in promoting ethical, transparent intercountry adoption systems at home and abroad, and ensuring that intercountry adoption remains an option for children in need of loving, permanent families when other paths to permanency are not feasible. The speaker will provide an update on current developments and the outlook for future engagement with foreign governments.

FRI 11:45–1:00 PM

ROOM // LINDELL C/D

TRACK // CARING AND CONNECTION

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT

## GRAB ‘N GO LUNCH



Thank you to Bronze Sponsor **Spence-Chapin Services to Families and Children** for sponsoring today’s lunch.

As we conclude our 2023 National Adoption Conference, NCFA would like to thank all sponsors, exhibitors, speakers, and attendees for making this year’s event such a success! We look forward to seeing you again next year!

FRI 1:00–2:00 PM

ROOM // KHORASSAN

*That's a wrap!*

Thank you for learning and growing with us at the 2023 National Adoption Conference! Stay in touch throughout the year by following @adoptioncouncil across all social channels. If you are pursuing social work CE, NY contact hours, or a certificate of attendance, see page three for follow-up instructions.

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KEEP ADOPTION SAFE.**

# Speaker Directory

Please refer to the Conference app or website to view full speaker bios and photos.

[adoptioncouncil.org/conference/speakers](https://adoptioncouncil.org/conference/speakers)



SCAN ME

## RENEE ALEXANDER, PHD

Associate Dean of Students, Cornell University (Retired)

"Birth Mother Perspectives: The Journey of Openness Over the Years"

Friday 9:00 AM – Cultural Competency & Ethics Track (Plenary)

## MONICA BAKER, MSW

Director of Domestic and Special Needs Adoption and Outreach Director, Spence-Chapin Services to Families and Children

"Birth Sibling Relationships: Preserving Connections and Navigating Complexities"

Thursday 3:00 PM – Caring & Connection Track

## MICHELLE BERNIER-TOTH, MA

Special Advisor for Children's Issues, U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs

"Intercountry Adoptions and the Department of State"

Friday 11:45 AM – Caring & Connection Track

## ASHLEY BOSCHEN, LPC

Program Manager, BraveLove

"Birth Parent Experiences: Research Findings and Practice Implications"

Thursday 1:45 PM – Cultural Competency & Ethics Track

## AMY BOURN

Section Chief of Orphan, Hague, and Adoption Form I-130s, National Benefits Center (NBC), USCIS

"Intercountry Adoption and USCIS"

Thursday 10:30 AM – Caring & Connection Track

## LAURA BRUDER

Executive Director, BraveLove

"Birth Parent Experiences: Research Findings and Practice Implications"

Thursday 1:45 PM – Cultural Competency & Ethics Track

## L. MICHELLE CODINGTON, LMFT, RPT-S, CFTP

Executive Director and Co-Founder, The Thrive Network

"Ruptures and Repairs: Addressing Attachment Patterns in Caregivers"

Thursday 1:45 PM – Clinical Track

## MELISSA CORKUM

Co-Founder, The Adoption Connection

"Blocked Care: Helping Parents Regain Compassion"

Wednesday 4:15 PM – Clinical Track

"Learning from Adoptees: Incorporating Adoptees' Voices into Practice"

Thursday 9:00 AM – Cultural Competency & Ethics Track (Plenary)

## ELIZABETH DOBSON, MA

Founder, Family Remixed

"Equipping Transracial Adoptive Parents to Cultivate Positive Racial Identity"

Wednesday 2:45 PM – Cultural Competency & Ethics Track

## ALEXIS EYLER

Executive Director, On Your Feet Foundation

"Ethics and Challenges in Post-Placement Birth Parent Care"

Wednesday 2:45 PM – Caring & Connection Track

## KAREN FOLI, PHD, RN, ANEF, FAAN

Professor, Purdue University School of Nursing

"Parental Postadoption Depression: Remind, Review, and Refresh"

Friday 10:30 AM – Clinical Track

## HEATHER T. FORBES, LCSW

Author, Speaker, and Owner of the Beyond Consequences Institute

"The Language of Trauma"

Wednesday 1:00 PM – Clinical Track (Plenary)

## KATIE GATTONE, MSW

Team Lead and Adoptive Parent Counselor, The Cradle

"Adoption Preparation, Support, and Preservation for Special Needs and Medically Complex Placements"

Thursday 3:00 PM – Clinical Track



### GENIE GILLESPIE, JD

Partner, Gillespie Law Group, LLC

“Understanding Subsidies: An Overview of Federal and State Adoption Assistance”

*Wednesday 2:45 PM – Caring & Connection Track*

### JODI GRIZZLE, LCSW

Clinical Director, Heart to Heart Adoptions

“Maintaining Birth Family Relationships Postplacement”

*Friday 10:30 AM – Cultural Competency & Ethics Track*

### RAMYA GRUNEISEN, MS

Missouri Refugee Wellness Program Officer, USCRI

“Learning from Adoptees: Incorporating Adoptees’ Voices into Practice”

*Thursday 9:00 AM – Cultural Competency & Ethics Track (Plenary)*

### RYAN HANLON, PHD, LMSW

President and CEO, National Council For Adoption

“Understanding Subsidies: An Overview of Federal and State Adoption Assistance”

*Wednesday 2:45 PM – Caring & Connection Track*

“Birth Parent Experiences: Research Findings and Practice Implications”

*Thursday 1:45 PM – Cultural Competency & Ethics Track*

### DAWN L. HART

Community Relations Specialist, Public Relations Division, USCIS

“Intercountry Adoption and USCIS”

*Thursday 10:30 AM – Caring & Connection Track*

### ROBIN HITT, RN

Author, Associate Certified Coach, and Certified Daring Way™ Facilitator, Robin Hitt Coaching

“Self-Compassion: Silencing the Inner Critic”

*Friday 10:30 AM – Caring & Connection Track*

### KIKI HUCKABY, MSED

Chief Impact Officer, MindSpark Learning

“Streamlining Initiatives for Child Wellbeing using an Executive Accelerator Model”

*Friday 11:45 AM – Caring & Connection Track*

### JANA HUNSLEY, PHD, LCSW

Founder and Executive Director, Project 1025, LLC.

“Inherently Connected: Rethinking Adoption Pre & Post Support Using a Family Systems Lens”

*Thursday 1:45 PM – Caring & Connection Track*

### JANELLE ISON, MBA

Adoption Education Special Projects Manager, National Council For Adoption

“Birth Mother Perspectives: The Journey of Openness Over the Years”

*Friday 9:00 AM – Cultural Competency & Ethics Track (Plenary)*

### JENNA L. JEBITSCH, PSYD, LPC

Owner and Clinician, Generation of Change, LLC

“Equipping Transracial Adoptive Parents to Cultivate Positive Racial Identity”

*Wednesday 2:45 PM – Cultural Competency & Ethics Track*

### JENNIFER KELLY, MS

Program Director, ACF Adoptions+ and Executive Director, Adopting Joy Consulting

“Understanding Subsidies: An Overview of Federal and State Adoption Assistance”

*Wednesday 2:45 PM – Caring & Connection Track*

### MESHAN LEHMANN, LCSW-C

Pregnancy Social Worker, Adoptions Together

“Birth Parent Grief: Analysis of Present Literature and Applications for Practice”

*Thursday 10:30 AM – Cultural Competency & Ethics Track*

### MICHELLE LI

Journalist at Today in St. Louis at 5 On Your Side and Co-Founder of The Very Asian Foundation

“Learning from Adoptees: Incorporating Adoptees’ Voices into Practice”

*Thursday 9:00 AM – Cultural Competency & Ethics Track (Plenary)*

### CELESTE LIVERSIDGE, JD

Attorney, TruAdopt Law

“The Continued Impact of Unregulated Domestic Infant Adoption”

*Friday 11:45 AM – Cultural Competency & Ethics Track*

### JESSICA LUCIERE

Community Engagement Manager, Spence-Chapin Services to Families and Children

“Supporting Adoptees in Early Adulthood”

*Wednesday 4:15 PM – Clinical Track*

### JESSICA MADRID

Supervisory Immigration Services Officer (Orphan and Hague Processes), National Benefits Center (NBC), USCIS

“Intercountry Adoption and USCIS”

*Thursday 10:30 AM – Caring & Connection Track*

### LISA MAYNARD, LMSW, ACSW, TCTS-F

Trainer and Implementation Specialist, Center for Adoption Support and Education

“Building the Gateway to Adoption Competency”

*Thursday 10:30 AM – Caring & Connection Track*

### KELLEY MILLER

Adjudications Officer, Field Operations Directorate (FOD), USCIS

"Intercountry Adoption and USCIS"

Thursday 10:30 AM – Caring & Connection Track

### KATIE MONROE, MSW

Social Worker and Adoption Service Provider, Independent Domestic Adoptions

"The Continued Impact of Unregulated Domestic Infant Adoption"

Friday 11:45 AM – Cultural Competency & Ethics Track

### GLENN MOREY

Filmmaker, Side by Side Project

"Side by Side: Out of a South Korean Orphanage and Into the World"

Thursday 3:00 PM – Cultural Competency & Ethics Track

### DANIEL NEHRBASS, PHD

President, Nightlight Christian Adoptions

"Preventing Disruption and Dissolution: Relational Strategies for Adoptive Parents"

Wednesday 4:15 PM – Caring & Connection Track

### MERCEDES O'BRYANT-GRUZESKI

Board Member, Family to Family Support Network

"Birth Mother Perspectives: The Journey of Openness Over the Years"

Friday 9:00 AM – Cultural Competency & Ethics Track (Plenary)

### DONNA POPE, MS, MED, ACMHC, RTT

Executive Director, Heart to Heart Adoptions

"Maintaining Birth Family Relationships Postplacement"

Friday 10:30 AM – Cultural Competency & Ethics Track

### KEVIN QUALLS, MDIV

Director of Development and Young Leader Relations, Christian Adoption Services and Baptist Children's Homes of NC

"Fundraising Basics to Support Adoption Agencies"

Wednesday 4:15 PM – Caring & Connection Track

### DEBBIE RILEY, LCMFT

CEO, Center for Adoption Support and Education

"The Unspoken Trauma: Loss"

Wednesday 2:45 PM – Clinical Track

### KATHY SANTANGELO

Adoptive Parent Counselor, The Cradle

"Adoption Preparation, Support, and Preservation for Special Needs and Medically Complex Placements"

Thursday 3:00 PM – Clinical Track

### AMY SILVERMAN, LMSW

Therapist for Pre & Post Adoption Services, Spence-Chapin Services to Families and Children

"Birth Sibling Relationships: Preserving Connections and Navigating Complexities"

Thursday 3:00 PM – Caring & Connection Track

### CHRISTINE TANGEL, LCSW

Director of Pre & Post Adoption Services, Spence-Chapin Services to Families and Children

"Supporting Adoptees in Early Adulthood"

Wednesday 4:15 PM – Clinical Track

### MIKE THORNE

Board Chair, National Council For Adoption

"Learning from Adoptees: Incorporating Adoptees' Voices into Practice"

Thursday 9:00 AM – Cultural Competency & Ethics Track (Plenary)

### KELSEY VANDER VLIET RANYARD

Director of Advocacy and Policy, AdoptMatch

"Birth Mother Perspectives: The Journey of Openness Over the Years"

Friday 9:00 AM – Cultural Competency & Ethics Track (Plenary)

"The Continued Impact of Unregulated Domestic Infant Adoption"

Friday 11:45 AM – Cultural Competency & Ethics Track

### KIM WARNER-HUDY, LCSW

Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Private Practice

"Side by Side: Out of a South Korean Orphanage and Into the World"

Thursday 3:00 PM – Cultural Competency & Ethics Track

### ELISABETH S. WILSON, MS

Strategic Change and Evaluation Specialist, Morgridge Family Foundation

"Streamlining Initiatives for Child Wellbeing using an Executive Accelerator Model"

Friday 11:45 AM – Caring & Connection Track

## Thank You Speakers!

NCFA is grateful for the wealth of knowledge and experiences our speakers bring to the Conference every year. Don't miss your chance to speak at next year's event! Join the NCFA conference email list at [adoptioncouncil.org/ncfa-conference](https://adoptioncouncil.org/ncfa-conference) to receive our Request for Proposals for 2024.

# Exhibitor Directory

It's easy to connect with this year's exhibitors as you head to a session, stop for a snack, or visit the Exhibitors page in the Conference app. Exhibitor hours are conference hours—breakfast through the final session.

Get your Exhibitor bingo card stamped by all of the exhibitors to be entered to win one of three \$50 gift cards! Just drop your completed card at the information desk by 9:00 am on Friday. We'll announce the winners at the end of the Friday morning plenary session.



## ABIDING LOVE CHARITIES

[abidinglovecharities.org](http://abidinglovecharities.org)

Abiding Love Charities is a post-placement support organization for all members of the Adoption Triad: Birth Parents, Adoptive Parents and Adoptees. Abiding Love Charities provides support through our Birth Mother Grant Program; Faith based Birth Mother Support Group Curriculum; Transracial Adoption Education; Open Adoption Education; Birth Mother, Adoptive Parent and Adoptee Mentorship Programs; and coaching calls for both Adoptive Parents from all members of the Adoption Triad.



## ABSOLUTE LOVE ADOPTIONS / SOLACE

[absoluteloveadoptions.com](http://absoluteloveadoptions.com)

Absolute Love Adoptions is a licensed nonprofit organization in Pennsylvania serving to cultivate an adoption conscious community. We offer home studies to families in PA, host the donation and distribution of SOLACE Care Packages for Birth Mothers and develop digital courses for the adoption community.



## ACADEMY OF ADOPTION & ASSISTED REPRODUCTION ATTORNEYS, INC.

[adoptionART.org](http://adoptionART.org)

The Academy of Adoption and Assisted Reproduction Attorneys (AAAA) is a credentialed organization dedicated to the competent and ethical practice of adoption and assisted reproduction law. It advocates for laws and policies to protect the best interests of children, the legal status of families formed through adoption and assisted reproduction, and the rights of all interested parties.



## AMERICA'S CHRISTIAN CREDIT UNION \* // Bronze Sponsor

[americaschristiancu.com/personal/adoption-loans](http://americaschristiancu.com/personal/adoption-loans)

We believe in building stronger families. Our low-rate adoption loans are great for both international and domestic adoption. Use the funds for expenses such as agency, court, and lawyer fees, a home study, or travel costs. Since this program's origination, we have been recognized by state representatives and adoption-supporting organizations like the Dave Thomas Adoption Foundation and the National Council For Adoption.



\* Thank you to these exhibitors for supporting the Conference as sponsors!



## BILLS TAX SERVICE

[billstaxservice.com](http://billstaxservice.com)

We are Adoption Tax Credit Specialist® and Enrolled Agents (Enrolled agent status is the highest credential the IRS awards). Our mission is to help families, caseworkers, agencies and attorneys understand how the adoption tax credit works. We are blessed by adoption and want to help as many families as possible.

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## BOTH HANDS FOUNDATION

[bothhands.org](http://bothhands.org)

Both Hands Foundation helps adoptive families & volunteer groups organize service projects for widows while raising funds for adoptions and orphan causes. Since we began, we've been able to coordinate over 1,200 projects serving over 1,300 widows and helping over 1,400 kids take one step closer to their forever home, all while raising over \$16M for adoption and orphan care.

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## CHADDOCK

[chaddock.org](http://chaddock.org)

Through our Developmental Trauma & Attachment Program, 3 out of 4 children and youth are able to return to their adoptive or foster home upon discharge. Treatment options include Residential, Accelerated Residential and In-Home Intensive programs. Many of the children we serve were adopted by loving families, but the unresolved issues from their early childhood prevent them from forming relationships. Our team works with the whole family to rebuild relationships and promote healing.

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## CHILD WELFARE INFORMATION GATEWAY

[childwelfare.gov](http://childwelfare.gov)

Child Welfare Information Gateway promotes the safety, permanency, and well-being of children, youth, and families by connecting child welfare, adoption, and related professionals as well as the public to information, resources, and tools covering topics on child welfare, child abuse and neglect, out-of-home care, adoption, and more.

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## CHRISTIAN ADOPTION SERVICES

[christianadopt.org](http://christianadopt.org)

Christian Adoption Services is on mission to connect vulnerable children with Christian families through domestic adoption, international adoption, and a foster-to-adoption program. Additionally, we provide Home Studies and Post Placement Services to families in North and South Carolina.

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## COMMERCE BANK

[commercebank.com/expensecard](http://commercebank.com/expensecard)

The CommercePayments Prepaid Expense Card, a prepaid Visa card, can help you get expectant mothers the funds they need, when they need them. Load and unload funds, instantly issue a card from your office, control merchant and cash use, and more.



## COURAGEOUS HEARTS ADOPTIONS, INC.

[chadoptions.org](http://chadoptions.org)

Courageous Hearts Adoptions is a non-profit child placing adoption agency, based out of Indiana. We work with birth parents and adoptive parents across the country! Our adoption and care services can be provided 100% remotely and we have an extensive network of in-state and out-of-state partnerships all over the country. Our mission is to provide competent and transparent adoption services which meet the unmet needs of the birth parents we serve, while reducing the financial risks to potential adoptive parents.



## ETHICAL FAMILY BUILDING

[ethicalfamilybuilding.org](http://ethicalfamilybuilding.org)

Ethical Family Building (dba AdoptMatch and AdoptChange) is a nonprofit organization promoting ethical practices in domestic infant adoption.



## FAMILY CONNECTIONS, INC.\* // Technology Sponsor

[adoptfamilyconnections.org](http://adoptfamilyconnections.org)

Family Connections, Inc., is a not-for-profit, New York State authorized private adoption agency who has been caring for families through domestic and international adoption since 1994. We are dedicated to supporting birth parents, adoptive parents, and children touched by adoption throughout the life-long journey of adoption.



## FAMILY TO FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK

[familytofamilysupport.org](http://familytofamilysupport.org)

Family to Family Support Network® is a pro-education, non-profit organization that partners with healthcare professionals and community organizations to better serve ALL families throughout their healthcare experience and beyond. FFSN trains healthcare professionals in adoption-sensitive care and strives to provide safe and ethical referrals to patients.



## GOOD SHEPHERD CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

[goodshepherdstl.org](http://goodshepherdstl.org)

Good Shepherd provides services and support to improve the health, safety and stability of at-risk, underserved mothers, babies, children, and families in the St. Louis metropolitan and surrounding areas through the following programs: Adoption, Foster Care, Maternity & Transitional Living Shelter, and Pregnancy & Parenting Support. Our vision is to ensure that every child grows up in a loving, safe, and supportive family and every person and family has an opportunity to thrive.



## HAWLEY & ASSOCIATES, A GALLAGHER COMPANY\* // Bronze Sponsor

[ajg.com/hawley](http://ajg.com/hawley)

Hawley & Associates, an Arthur J Gallagher company, was founded in 2005 exclusively to provide specialized insurance services for adoption, foster care and child welfare agencies. Our goal is to bring “excellence” in insurance to social service agencies around the world. Understanding your insurance needs, finding the “right” coverage to protect your organization, at the most affordable price, is our sincere desire.



Insurance | Risk Management | Consulting

## HOLT INTERNATIONAL \* // Bronze Sponsor

[holtinternational.org](http://holtinternational.org)

For more than 65 years, Holt International has worked toward a world where every child has a stable, loving home. Around the world, we care for orphaned and vulnerable children, strengthen families at risk of separation and help children join families through in-country or international adoption. For every child and family united through adoption, we provide lifelong support and resources.



## INREACH SOLUTIONS

[inreachsolutions.com](http://inreachsolutions.com)

InReach Solutions makes SAM, a customizable, web-based software for foster care and adoption agencies. We prioritize social worker's knowledge and influence and believe with support, they can expand their capacity to help communities thrive. We work together with social workers to design systems reflecting their programs today and drive changes that create a better tomorrow.



## LITTLE AMPERSAND CO.

[littleampersandco.com](http://littleampersandco.com)

Little Ampersand Co. creates beautiful, ethical adoption profile books for hopeful adoptive families. With our personal adoption experience and storytelling approach, we take the stress out of making a meaningful connection with an expectant parent!

## LITTLE AMPERSAND CO.

## LUTHERAN FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF MISSOURI

[lfcsmo.org](http://lfcsmo.org)

Throughout our long history, LFCS has adapted to meet the needs of children and families in our communities. Today, LFCS is a statewide social services agency providing mental health, parenting, foster care, adoption, child development, and community prevention services—reaching out to more than 38,000 children and families last year alone.



## NATIONAL TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM

[ntdcportal.org](http://ntdcportal.org)

The NTDC has undergone a rigorous evaluation in seven pilot sites (which consists of states and counties and one tribal nation) and four private agencies that work with families who adopt private domestically or via the intercountry process. The NTDC team is excited about this curriculum and its potential to positively impact not only the lives of parents who are fostering or adopting but also the lives of children who are in foster care or have been adopted.



## NEW BEGINNINGS ADOPTION & FAMILY SERVICES \* // Bronze Sponsor

[newbeginningsadoptions.org](http://newbeginningsadoptions.org)

New Beginnings Adoption and Family Services is a non-profit Adoption and Family Service that provides an abortion alternative for birth mothers and offers adoption opportunities for those who seek parenthood. New Beginnings provides both domestic and international adoption opportunities, as well as home study services.





## OUR HEARTS CONNECT

[heartsconnect.info](https://heartsconnect.info)

OurHeartsConnect™ is a secure communication, information, and photo sharing portal designed specifically for the unique needs of adoptive parents, birth parents, adopted children, and children in long- and short-term foster care. Adoption Professionals can offer this service to each of their clients. Our goal is long-term healthy relationships between the adoption/foster care triad. Moderation is offered to ensure all communications are appropriate and participants are safe and respected.



## PARENTFINDER\* // Copper Sponsor

[parentfinder.com](https://parentfinder.com)

Parentfinder's methods of adoption profile design and marketing leads to more matches than any other profile service in domestic infant adoption. Adoption professionals can text their parent's profiles to expecting women in seconds making follow up easy and seamless. Our waiting families plugin displays your families on your website with one click of a mouse. Smart, successful, Parentfinder, the perfect companion to your outreach program.



## PATHWAYS FOR LITTLE FEET

[pathwaysforlittlefeet.org](https://pathwaysforlittlefeet.org)

Pathways for Little Feet is a faith-based non-profit that helps families overcome financial barriers through Adoption Financial Assistance providing interest-free loans up to \$10,000. Our Post-Adoption Support Program includes counseling grants, retreat and conference scholarships, and other resources. The Andrew Project, provides support for those in the foster care journey to receive trauma-competent counseling and therapy and supports parent coaching.



## PURL ADOPTION ADVISORY

[purladoptions.com](https://purladoptions.com)

At Purl Adoption Advisory, we guide prospective adoptive families through the domestic adoption process, educating throughout to create better adoption experiences for all members of the adoption triad. We also assist families with growing their family through embryo adoption/donation.



## REIMAGINE BEST

[reimaginebest.com](https://reimaginebest.com)

Reimagining best as we face life and business challenges is vital. Life doesn't always give us what we were expecting, so navigating the present while re-envisioning and achieving what matters most is key to life satisfaction. This truth is often embodied through birth parenting and adoption. Fully illustrated new release: Adopting a Family for You: A Love Story is an adoption apologetic, championing of birth mothers and encouragement to adoptees.



## RG ADOPTION CONSULTING\* // Lanyard Sponsor

[rgadoptionconsulting.com](https://rgadoptionconsulting.com)

Our mission is to guide, support, and educate open-minded, hopeful parents to fulfill their dream of becoming a family through domestic adoption while providing ethical resources and a heart-centered adoption community.



## ROBIN HITT

[robinhitt.com](http://robinhitt.com)

Robin Hitt ACC, CDWF is an adoptive mom who went on a quest to find why her kids weren't like biologicals. After exhaustive interviews with adoptive parents, adoptees, birth mothers, doctors, and therapists she decided to write the book she wished she would have had. *Open-Eyed Adoption, Real Help For Those Parenting Adoptees* is a must have resource for therapists and social workers who support members of the adoption triad.



## SHARED BEGINNINGS

[sharedbeginnings.org](http://sharedbeginnings.org)

As a nonprofit family support agency with a mission to empower communities to build healthy families by supporting birth families, pregnant women, adoptees, and adoptive parents, we exist to raise the standard of ethical adoption in Arkansas. We offer trauma informed support services to expectant families, birth families, and adoptive families, for life.



## SOCIAL CURRENT \* // Bronze Sponsor

[social-current.org](http://social-current.org)

Born out of the merger of the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities and the Council on Accreditation, Social Current is the premier partner and service provider to human and social service organizations. We offer a range of services and opportunities including: COA Accreditation, Consulting and Learning, Engagement Packages, and Policy and Advocacy. Join our network of 1,800+ organizations!



## SPENCE-CHAPIN SERVICES TO FAMILIES & CHILDREN \* // Bronze Sponsor

[spence-chapin.org](http://spence-chapin.org)

Spence-Chapin is a full-service adoption agency with over 100 years of experience providing quality services. Spence-Chapin currently offers the following programs and services: domestic infant adoption, international adoption, special needs adoption, home study services, options counseling, interim care services, mentorship, community events, counseling, parent trainings, education workshops, and humanitarian aid to children living in institutions around the world. Spence-Chapin envisions a world where adoption is a celebrated choice, every child belongs, and all families are embraced.



## STEPGUIDE, LLC

[stepguide.app](http://stepguide.app)

The adoption process can be complex...especially for your client family! STEPGUIDE web-software helps remove complexity by guiding your client, step-by-step, through your process. First, you set up your agency's unique standard processes. Next, when you get a new client you copy the relevant process to your client's file and customize it further if necessary. And finally, share it with them. You will enjoy real-time visibility to their progress, and they will enjoy the step-by-step simplicity.



## YOUR ADOPTION FINANCE COACH

[youradoptionfinancecoach.com](http://youradoptionfinancecoach.com)

The team of experts at Your Adoption Finance Coach has helped thousands of families by assisting them in understanding the financial requirements, creating a comprehensive budget, and establishing a plan for the best ways to afford and fund their adoption journeys.





# Professional Membership

When you join our nationwide network of adoption agencies and attorneys, you gain access to a variety of exclusive member benefits, such as:



## ADVOCACY

- Legislative and policy alerts
- Tools for congressional engagement
- Advocating directly with policymakers on behalf of our members



## PROMOTION

- Listing in online member directory
- Use of the NCFA member badge on your website
- Referrals for prospective clients and friendly media inquiries



## EDUCATION

- Adoption-specific education
- Discounted rates on conference registration, training courses, and CE offerings
- Members-only webinars
- Monthly members newsletter



## COMMUNITY

- Program, country, and topic specific listserves
- Access to members portal and directory
- Priority support from NCFA's staff experts
- Caucus calls and meetings



Learn more and apply at [adoptioncouncil.org/membership](https://adoptioncouncil.org/membership)

SCAN ME





## Wednesday, June 28

1:00	Opening Plenary
2:15	Snack Break with Exhibitors
2:45	Breakout Sessions
3:45	Break
4:15	Breakout Sessions
6:00	Executive Directors Social Hour & Dinner

## Thursday, June 29

8:00	Breakfast
9:00	Morning Plenary
10:15	Break
10:30	Breakout Sessions
12:00	Break
12:15	Networking Lunch
1:45	Breakout Sessions
2:45	Break
3:00	Breakout Sessions
4:30	Pre-Game Reception
5:15	First Round of Buses Depart Hotel
6:15	Baseball Game Begins
8:00	First Round of Buses Depart Stadium

## Friday, June 30

8:00	Breakfast
9:00	Morning Plenary
10:15	Break
10:30	Breakout Sessions
11:30	Break
11:45	Breakout Sessions
1:00	Grab 'n Go Lunch and Conference Concludes

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