



Support. Education. Local Events.
for Adoptive Families



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The PARC newsletter is published quarterly. Please direct questions and comments to parcnewsletter@bethany.org

Bethany Christian Services is a nonprofit, private social services agency with more than 115 offices located in 36 states. In addition, Bethany offers social services to children and families in 15 countries.



www.bethany.org

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Crossing Cultures, Healing Hearts

Kimberly Waldie, Post-Adoption Resource Center, Region Two

The Post-Adoption Resource Center has the privilege of serving families of adoption, including those who've adopted internationally and transracially. While all adoptions involve loss, we know international and transracial adoptive children can face the additional loss of culture and ethnicity. In their book *Adopting the Hurt Child*, Dr. Gregory C. Keck and Regina M. Kupecky say, "Parents who adopt children from other countries need to be realistic not only about their children's probable feelings of loss, but also about their possible need to reconnect with their country or culture and/or search for their birth families at some point during their lives."

In this issue, you will hear the heart of an adult adoptee who reminds us of this loss but leaves us with hope and a reminder that we (adoptive parents) are doing important heart work as we walk with our children through the healing process.

We will also share resources to remind you you're not alone on this journey. There are many professionals, adoptive parents and adult adoptees who are sharing what they've learned. A few quick starting suggestions:

Find mentors who can speak into your child's life as it pertains to their culture/ethnicity. While your child is part of a transracial family when they are young, they will enter the adult world as a member of a minority group and need people who can help them navigate their way.

- Celebrate your child's cultural history, and keep dialogue open so they are free to share with you.
- Realize that your child's questions about birth family and culture are a natural and necessary part of their adoption and identity journey.
- Confront racism by being an advocate for your child.

Keck, G.C. and R.M. Kupecky. *Adopting the Hurt Child: Hope for Families with Special-Needs Kids (A Guide for Parents and Professionals)*. Colorado: Pinon Press, 1995.

A Place to Belong

by Cally Prince, 21-year-old adoptee, Region 2 (Traverse City, MI)

As an international adoptee from China, I have no recollection of my biological parents, homeland, or orphanage. To this day, there is a dull ache that pulsates within my heart because the origin of my story is still out of reach. Though the first few chapters of my life do exist somewhere deep within my subconscious, I don't have the privilege to unlock the vault and read the content. I can testify through these troublesome circumstances there is a real sense of loss that resides within me. The trauma of being separated from my birth mother, uprooted from my country, and planted in a foreign place has taken a toll on me, mentally and emotionally.

A few obstacles that I have had to overcome in my life are the fear of abandonment, intimacy, and identity. Since I had no control over my environment and circumstances at such a young age, the gripping fear of being left behind saturated my thinking. In many ways I think I filtered life through the lens of abandonment. For example, if I was accidentally separated from my adoptive parents in a grocery store or crowded setting, an overwhelming sense of panic would hit me. The abandonment tape would reel itself over and over inside of me, and I would question if I would ever see my adoptive parents again. The fear of losing them caused me to develop separation anxiety; it lasted until my first year in middle school.

The second roadblock in my life was learning to trust my family and friends. Building relationships, for the longest time, was not an easy task, because the fear of rejection caused me to fear intimacy itself. *If I allowed these walls of fear to come down, would I feel secure enough to be transparent with others? If I did not present myself in a way that was acceptable, would my adoptive parents and friends turn away from me?* Keeping everyone at a distance, in fear of being hurt, caused me to tread a very lonely path in life. Loneliness became a good friend of mine, and depression and anxiety followed close behind.

I am worthy of being loved, no matter my nationality or the color of my skin.

The final hurdle I had to jump over was understanding and accepting my identity. As an Asian descendant living in America, I knew from a young age that I looked different from my peers. I could tell that my skin was distinct in color and that my long hair was darker than most. I did not seem to “blend in.” For several years, I struggled with accepting my distinct physical features and wondered about my origin and biological family back in China. Where do I belong? is a question I asked myself often.

From the very beginning of the adoption process to today, my adoptive parents faithfully entered into my story and gave me a safe place to grieve, heal, and grow. At times, when my abandonment issues were overwhelming, my loving parents would gently untangle the chains of my fears by allowing me the freedom

and time to express my inner doubts and troubles. In my deepest grief they cried with me, held me and reassured me time after time they were not going to let go. My trust in them grew exponentially over the years, and the process of healing became more and more evident in my life. Through countless hours of conversations and meetings, my adoptive parents gave me the counsel and wisdom I needed to build healthy relationships with my peers. Sacrificing their time and being emotionally available gave me the courage to open my heart—the courage to receive love and give it in return.

I have made peace with myself and my identity through my adoptive parents who have opened their arms and heart to me. They showed me that I am worthy of being loved, no matter my nationality or the color of my skin. As far as my biological parents go, I still desire to meet them one day—to obtain closure by opening the locked vault. I strongly believe it is a natural desire for most adoptees to seek closure by meeting their biological family. Whether the answers that I seek are resolved or not, I know without a shadow of a doubt that my adoptive parents will always be my true mother and father. In their loving arms is where I belong. They are my home.

Helpful Tidbits for the Year Ahead



DID YOU KNOW?

Certificate of Citizenship

We have been receiving calls from many parents of children who have been adopted internationally and are being required by the Secretary of State to obtain their Certificate of Citizenship before they can receive their driving permit. The Application for Certificate of Citizenship, also known as Form N-600 can be found online, or you can contact your local PARC office for assistance in applying. A fee is assessed from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security when obtaining a Certificate of Citizenship.

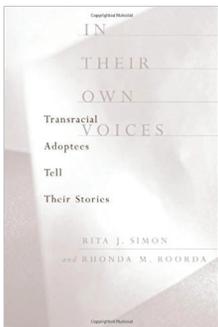
DID YOU KNOW ...

Adoption Assistance and Medical Subsidy Extension

Adoption assistance and medical subsidies may be extended up to the maximum age of 19 for children who meet all the following specific conditions:

- The child is age 18 and has not completed high school or a GED program.
- The child is regularly attending school full time.
- The child is working toward the completion of a high school diploma, certificate of completion, or its equivalent.
- The child is not eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

If your child meets the above requirements, contact your local PARC so that they may assist you in requesting an extension any time up to 30 days after the child's 18th birthday.

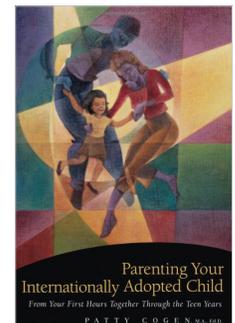


In Their Own Voices:
Transracial Adoptees Tell Their Stories
Rita Simon & Rhonda Roorda

suggested reading



Parenting Your
Internationally Adopted Child:
From Your First Hours Together
Through the Teen Years
Patty Cogen



Quotes to Inspire You

"Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage." – *Anais Nin*

local events & training & family activities

All three Post-Adoption Resource Centers have many family fun events planned for winter, as well as support groups and trainings. Please check your Post Adoption Resource Center region's Facebook page, watch for monthly calendars, or give us a call to find out what is available near you.

REGION 2:
Northern Michigan
231-421-6500
parctc@bethany.org

[www.facebook.com/
PostAdoptionResourceCenter
OfNorthernMI](http://www.facebook.com/PostAdoptionResourceCenterOfNorthernMI)

REGION 3:
Central Michigan
231-924-3390

[www.facebook.com/
PostAdoptionResource
CenterCentralMichigan](http://www.facebook.com/PostAdoptionResourceCenterCentralMichigan)

REGION 4:
Western Michigan
616-224-7565
parcgr@bethany.org

[www.facebook.com/
PARCRegion4](http://www.facebook.com/PARCRegion4)

The Post-Adoption Resource Center is Pleased to Announce the Launch of our Brand New Website!

After months of challenging work, we are excited to tell you about the Post-Adoption Resource Center's new website: <https://postadoptionrc.org>, redesigned with YOU in mind! Our new site is mobile friendly, with simple navigation and access to the information you need. With simple clicks, you can see what services PARC provides, and you'll have access to adoption articles, PARC newsletters, and region-specific events and resources. We're very proud of our new website and hope you'll take a few minutes to check it out!



Fun and Inexpensive Spring Break Ideas:

PLACES TO GO:

- Go to the library, check out books, and join story time.
- Go have a play date at McDonald's with a friend.
- Go for a Sunday drive any day of the week.
- Go camping in the yard, the living room, or make it a weekend trip.
- Go fly kites at the park.

THINGS TO MAKE:

- Make paper plate zoo animals.
- Read your favorite Dr. Seuss book and create a craft to do with it.
- Make homemade play dough.
- Make an obstacle course (or hold an Olympics) in your backyard.
- Make a time capsule.
- Make homemade pizza together.

STUFF TO DO:

- Play balloon hockey.
- Have a picnic at the park, in your living room, or in your front yard.
- Make water balloons and have a water balloon fight.
- Volunteer as a family.
- Have a scavenger hunt.
- Build a clubhouse or a fort.
- Plant a garden.
- Handwrite letters to family.



Bethany Christian Services is committed to supporting adoptive families through the lifelong, rewarding journey of adoption.

REGION 2
Bethany Christian Services
1055 Carriage Hill Dr, Ste 2
Traverse City, MI 49686
231-995-0870
www.bethany.org/traversecity

Charlevoix, Emmett, Cheboygan, Presque Isle, Antrim, Otsego, Montmorency, Alpena, Leelanau, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Crawford, Oscoda, Alcona, Manistee, Wexford, Missaukee, Roscommon, Ogemaw, and Iosco counties

REGION 3
Bethany Christian Services
6995 West 48th St
Fremont, MI 49412
231-924-3390
www.bethany.org/fremont

Mason, Lake, Osceola, Clare, Gladwin, Arenac, Oceana, Newaygo, Mecosta, Isabella, Midland, Bay, Montcalm, Gratiot, Saginaw, Ionia, Clinton, and Shiawassee counties

REGION 4
Bethany Christian Services
901 Eastern Ave NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616-224-7565
www.bethany.org/grandrapids

Allegan, Berrien, Cass, Kent, Muskegon, Ottawa, and Van Buren counties



postadoptionrc.org

other suggested websites: www.adoptivefamilies.com www.adoptioninstitute.org