

REACH

Tulare
County

Resource Education Advocacy Crisis Intervention Hope

Aspiranet and Tulare County Post-Adoption Support



Greetings REACH Families and Adoption Helpers! Happy New Year!

Winter 2013

We hope your family was able to maximize the pleasures and minimize the stressors of the holiday season. And we are off to a new year!

We had a large crowd, about 120 children, parents, and adoption workers, at our National Adoption Day Celebration on November 1st at Rollertown. We enjoyed pizza, cake, face painting, a bounce house, a demonstration by roller derby youth, raffle prizes and roller skating. We are pleased to see this event grow each year and we hope to meet many new families who finalize their adoptions in 2013.

REACH has something different in mind for our support groups on January 15, February 5 and 19, and March 5 and 19. We will present a trauma-focused workshop series called *Becoming a Trauma Competent Healing Parent*. Our goal is to help parents increase their understanding of the unique needs of children who come from hard places, how to parent children with histories of trauma, and understand the impact of raising traumatized children on the family. We will provide child care and training hours as usual, however **SPACE IS LIMITED AND YOU MUST REGISTER TO ATTEND**. Check this newsletter for more information. Participants who attend all five sessions will receive a copy of Jayne Schooler's book, *Wounded Children, Healing Homes*.

In This Newsletter:

We are listening to the voices of adopted children through quotes, a poem, an interview, and a drawing. We also have some ideas for New Years Resolutions, DVD recommendations and tips for creating memorable family movie nights. Additionally, we have some adoption tax credit information and a review of *Hootah's Baby* by Joanne Green. This book is meant for caring adults to share with adopted children.

One last thing: Please take a moment to appreciate the energy and compassion you bring to adoptive parenting and supporting adoptive families. You are a tremendous gift to your children and our community. Thank you from REACH.

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(((The Voices of our Children))))))

"Adoption means having a FOREVER family who will love you and keep you safe."
- 7 yr old girl

"Adoption means growing up with a family who will love you."
- 5 yr old girl

"I want to be adopted because that means staying with my family forever and ever."
- 8 yr old boy

"Adoption means no more social workers coming to see you and having court."
- 12 yr old girl

"Adoption is when your birth mommy could not take care of you so you go to live with a forever family who loves you and will always keep you."
- 6 yr old boy

"Adoption means you don't have to be moved to different homes and you get to live with a family for a long time."
- 13 yr old boy

"I was adopted because my mom and dad could not keep me safe so I went with a family who keeps me safe, but that does not mean your birth family does not love you because they still do they just couldn't keep me safe."
- 7 yr old girl

"Adoption means not just having the family who adopted you but your birth family too."
- 9 yr old girl

"Adoption means being able to live with your brothers and sisters with a family who is forever and you can come back to live with even when you're grown up."
- 8 yr old boy

"When you are adopted you still miss your mom and dad and want to see them but your adoptive parents understand and will comfort you."
- 11 yr old girl

Comments on the book, *Little Bunnies say Goodbye to Birth Mom.*

"The bunny and kitty book talks about the momma not being able to take care of her little bunnies because she is not a safe mommy. So the little bunnies go live with a kitty family who adopts them and loves them. And when the little bunnies miss their mommy bunny they cry because they miss the mommy and the kitty adoption momma tells the little bunnies it's ok to cry. My adoption mom tells me it is ok to cry and be sad when I miss my real mommy."
- 5yr old girl

Interview with Aidan Riley, age 9

Interviewed by adoptive Mom Alison Acton

What do you think about being adopted?

I first thought that people wouldn't like me because I was adopted but last year in my second grade class my teacher Mrs. Blythe announced it and told the class that one of her very good friends was adopted. The students were like Wow and one kid got jealous and that made me feel awesome.

What does it mean to be adopted?

That somebody actually cared for me and wanted me. I think it is good being adopted.

Why did you think that people wouldn't like you because you were adopted?

Everybody else had a mom that they were born with but now there is a girl in my class who was adopted who is also dark skinned and has a white mom and that makes me feel happy that I am not the only one.

What was it like learning you had 2 birth brothers and a sister?

I thought it was really awesome. I told my friends, my best friend cared about that.

What was it like meeting your oldest brother?

It was sweet; he loves the 49ers like me. I always wanted a brother. He gave me a drawing of a cartoon and it was great. He was very nice to me and I knew that I had a brother; I had that feeling for a long time. I felt it in my mind seeing 2 brothers and a sister.

What do you hope for in your future relationship with your brother?

That we can get to know each other better.

How do you feel about your birthmother?

I wish I could meet her. (To which adoptive mom responded – you can meet her).

How do you feel about (adoptive) Mom and Dad?

Good, awesome!!!!

What advice would you give to adopted kids?

Be proud of yourself and if someone says you stink because you are adopted, say well guess what my mom got me because she wanted me.



Adopted or Not, You Are Loved

By Keegan Tripp, the Dog Lover

Adopted or not, if you're a brother or sister,
You're loved by your mom,
you're loved by your Dad,
you're loved by your grandparents,
You're loved by everyone.

And no matter how small or how big,
If you're a brother or a sister, you are loved
Just the same. No matter who you are,
You're still loved.

No one can change you because you're you
And everyone loves the same old you.

New Year's Resolutions for Adoptive Parents

Based on an article by Carrie Craft @ <http://adoption.about.com/od/newsandreference/a/topquestions.htm>

As busy parents, it's easier to manage one New Year's resolution per month rather than several throughout the year. Here are 12 adoption goals that might apply to your family. Remember: progress not perfection!

January - I will continue to learn about adoptive parenting by attending a REACH adoption support group, a parenting workshop or internet training.

February - I will strengthen my relationship with my children through bonding activities including side hugs, walks, cooking, home repairs, high fives, fist bumps and family games.

March - I will help my child share his feelings about his birth family by writing letters, drawing or starting a journal together. We might decorate a box to store these items, or start an adoption life book together.

April - I will help my child connect with her heritage by incorporating foods and traditions from her culture into our family core traditions.



May - I will explore adoption resources available in my community including REACH Adoption Services, therapy, respite providers, day care and after school creative arts and physical activities.

June - The best way to learn about adoptive parenting is to listen to other adoptive parents. I will attend a REACH support group or training, or look for blogs or adoption forums on the internet so I can connect with other adoptive parents.

July - I will work with my child to help her answer intrusive questions others may ask about adoption. I will also prepare myself to answer questions from my family, friends and community.

August - I will familiarize myself with alternative schools in my community that may have a greater capacity to meet my child's needs.

September - I will cultivate relationships between my child and parents, siblings, their children and my chosen family. I know it's important to have several positive role models in my child's life, especially if we are a mixed race family.

October - I will help my child enjoy the upcoming holidays by preparing for celebrations. I will keep in mind that holidays tend to bring up happy and unhappy memories for foster/adopted children, so I will make sure there's time to explore and support my child's feelings.

November - I will expand my reading library or borrow from the REACH lending library, or watch a movie with an adoption theme. I realize relating to other parents and children who understand adoption, even if it's a chapter in a book or a character in a movie, is helpful for my family.

December - I will reflect on the progress my family made in 2013. I will set new goals for 2014, emphasizing progress rather than perfection, and prepare for another wonderful year!

NEED HELP?

Is your adoptive child exhibiting any of the following behaviors?

- Frequent running away
- Sexualized behavior
- Posttraumatic stress disorder
- Aggressive/assaultive behavior
- Oppositional/defiant behavior
- Self-injurious behavior
- One or more hospitalizations in a Mental Health facility
- Substance use disorder
- Fire starter
- Minor criminal behavior
- School behavior/truancy problems
- Beyond control of parents and/or primary care adults
- Mild Developmental disorder not recognized by a Regional Center

If so, we can help! The REACH program can connect adoptive families to services that can help. Some of the services available to your family include Therapeutic Behavior Services (TBS) and Tulare County Wraparound. TBS is an intensive one-to-one behavioral mental health service. The service is available to parents/caregivers of children/youth who experience serious emotional challenges. Tulare County Wraparound provides high-risk youth and their families an alternative to group home care. Wraparound is a family-centered, strength-based, needs-driven philosophy promoting the reestablishment of at-risk youth and families into community support systems.

THE 2012 ADOPTION TAX CREDIT

Based on the article *Save the Adoption Tax Credit* @ <http://adoptiontaxcredit.org/faqs/>

The adoption tax credit helps thousands of children find permanent, loving homes, including children adopted from foster care. Most of these children are older, part of a sibling group, or have a disability.

In 2012, the adoption tax credit has a maximum of \$12,650. It applies to all types of adoption, including foster care, international, or private U.S. adoptions.

The 2012 adoption tax credit is not refundable. That means only families who have a tax liability (meaning they will pay federal income taxes) will benefit. A non-refundable credit means taxpayers will receive a federal income tax refund up to the amount of taxes they owe. Please consult your tax advisor for clarification.

After 2012, the credit will apply only to special needs adoptions where the family has qualified adoption expenses. Most of the adoptions from foster care do not have upfront expenses, so very few families who adopt from foster care will receive any refund. Those adopting internationally or privately will not receive a benefit at all. The adoption tax credit will not go away completely, but after December 31, 2012, it will be limited to a \$6,000 nonrefundable credit for authorized expenses for special needs adoptions. This will help very few adoptive families and vulnerable children.



Family Movie Night



5 Tips for Family Movie Night

Mix Classics and Current Releases - Movie night is a great excuse to share classic movies.

Create a Theater - Transform your living room into a cozy theater with blankets and pillows. Use soft lighting and turn the other lights off.

Popcorn! - Serve fresh popcorn in a popcorn box and set out toppings like red pepper, cinnamon/sugar and melted butter or caramel.

Intermissions - Plan an intermission halfway through the movie for everyone to take a break and refill food and drinks. Flicker the lights when its time to begin again.

After the Movie - Engage your children in a discussion about what they liked or didn't like about the movie (thumbs up or down) and discuss any lessons learned.

5 Classic Family Movies on DVD

The Land Before Time (G)–This movie has a suspenseful storyline, great songs, and loveable characters. Littlefoot, a young orphaned dinosaur, undertakes an adventure to Great Valley in order to survive a plague. In the process he makes lots of friends. Appropriate for all ages.

Goonies (PG) –This is an action/fantasy movie about a group of adventure-seeking kids with a treasure map. No matter what they face, their bond cannot be broken. Appropriate for kids age 10 and up.

Pollyanna (G)–Pollyanna with Haley Mills, is about an orphan sent to live with her rich Aunt Polly. Pollyanna is unbelievably positive in a non-annoying way that impresses people of all ages. Appropriate for all ages.

Akeelah and the Bee (PG) – This movie is full of great lessons on resisting peer pressure, true friendship, and perseverance. It shows how hard work can help you gain a lot more than a big trophy. Appropriate for ages 10 and up.

The Sandlot (PG) - This '50s era movie is about a gang of boys and their summer of innocent mischief. It's a great opportunity for parents to reminisce and share their own childhood shenanigans. Appropriate for ages 10 and up. Also consider the female equivalent *Now and Then*, appropriate for kids 12 and up.

Book Reviews



Book Review for Parents & Children

Hootah's Baby

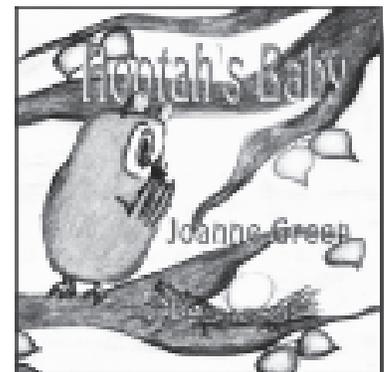
By Joanne Green

Hootah's Baby is designed for caring adults to share with a child.

Hootah's Baby is a story about a mother owl whose life-style choices make safety impossible. As the owl community steps in to protect the child, they don't question whether Hootah's mother loves her baby or not. They focus on Hootah's need for safety.

This book is a tool to help children who have been detained or relinquished by their birth family and placed in a fost/adopt setting. It helps children understand the complex issues that led to their adoption.

Hootah's Baby includes information and tools for adults to open communication with their children and help them understand important basic truths: they are not at fault; the courts are not the bad guys; and their mothers do, in fact, love them. They simply cannot parent any child at that point in their lives.



SUPPORT GROUPS

JANUARY

- 1** HOLIDAY: NO TULARE REACH SUPPORT GROUP
Tulare Location
- 15** KINGS REACH SUPPORT GROUP
Kings County Adoption Support Group
5:30 -7:00pm
Kings County Location
- 15** TULARE REACH SUPPORT GROUP
Healing Parents Workshop
You must pre-register to attend
6:30-8:00pm
Tulare County Location

FEBRUARY

- 5** TULARE REACH SUPPORT GROUP
Healing Parents Workshop
You must pre-register to attend
6:30-8:30pm
Tulare County Location
- 8** COLLEGE OF SEQUOIAS TRAINING
Advocacy and Effective
Parent/Teacher Meetings
9:00am-12:00pm
Please contact Linda Paredez
- 8** KINGS REACH SUPPORT GROUP
5:30-7:00pm
New location to be announced
- 19** TULARE REACH SUPPORT GROUP
Healing Parents Workshop
You must pre-register to attend
6:30-8:30pm
Tulare County Location

MARCH

- 5** TULARE REACH SUPPORT GROUP
Healing Parents Workshop
You must pre-register to attend
6:30-8:30pm
Tulare County Location
- 8** COLLEGE OF SEQUOIAS TRAINING
Helping the Socially Challenged Child
9:00am-12:00pm
Please contact Linda Paredez
- 12** KINGS REACH SUPPORT GROUP
5:30-7:00pm
New location to be announced
- 19** TULARE REACH SUPPORT GROUP
Healing Parents Workshop
You must pre-register to attend
6:30-8:30pm
Tulare County Location

REACH ADOPTION SUPPORT GROUPS

REACH PRESENTS A FIVE SESSION TRAUMA WORKSHOP

BECOMING A TRAUMA COMPETENT HEALING PARENT

January 15, February 5 & 19, March 5 & 19, 2013

Visalia YMCA, 211 West Tulare Ave, 6:30 to 8:00PM

Child care and training hours provided

SPACE IS LIMITED. YOU MUST REGISTER TO ATTEND.

When a child enters a foster/adopt home following a history of drug exposure, abuse, neglect or trauma, that child will significantly impact the family. Often there are unexpected challenges. This may cause confusing emotions and parents may feel ill-equipped for the journey ahead.

This trauma focused workshop series will provide a practical how-to approach with specific tools and skills to parent children who come from hard places. Parents awaiting adoptive placement as well as new and experienced parents are welcome to attend. If you decide to register, please clear your calendar for all five sessions, and you will receive a copy of Jane Schooler's book, *Wounded Children, Healing Homes*.

This workshop series will help parents:

- Learn about the unique needs of children who come from hard places
- Learn how to parent children with histories of trauma
- Understand the impact of raising traumatized children on the family

THIS TRAUMA FOCUSED WORKSHOP WILL REPLACE REACH SUPPORT GROUPS ON:

January 15, February 5 & 19, March 5 & 19, 2013

SPACE IS LIMITED: YOU MUST PRE-REGISTER TO ATTEND

For information and registration, please call Marji Peterson 559-741-7358 ext. 4512, or email mpeterson@aspiranet.org

Tulare County Location

Visalia YMCA, 211 West Tulare Ave. Visalia CA 93277

Child care and training hours provided

Contact Marji Peterson, MFTI (559)741-7358 ext. 4512 or mpeterson@aspiranet.org

KINGS COUNTY ADOPTION SUPPORT GROUP

Tuesday, January 15, 2013

This group is designed for new and experienced adoptive parents.

Kings County Location

Hanford Family Connections, 315 Lacey Blvd. Hanford, CA 93230
(Between McDonalds & Burger King)

Child care and training hours provided

This location will only be available on January 15th.

After January, a new site will be established.

Please call the office 559-741-7358 for the new address.

Contact Marji Peterson, MFTI (559)741-7358 ext. 4512 or mpeterson@aspiranet.org

COLLEGE OF SEQUOIAS FOSTER & KINSHIP CARE EDUCATION PROGRAM

The College of Sequoias Foster & Kinship Care Education Program offers trainings of interest to foster and adoptive parents at no charge in Visalia and Hanford. For a complete list of classes google "COS Visalia Kinship". Register with Linda Paredez at (559)737-4842 or lindap@cos.edu.

Classes are presented in English and Spanish.

Training location information:

College of the Sequoias
915 South Mooney Boulevard
Visalia, CA 93277

Kings Human Services Agency (HSA)
1400 W. Lacey Blvd.
Hanford CA 93230

Aspiranet
151 Canal Drive
Turlock, CA 95380

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We're on the Web:
www.reachtularecounty.org



ASPIRAnet
Raising Hope. Empowering Community.



Aspiranet and Tulare County Post-Adoption Support Services

Resource: We provide 1) telephone support & referral to local services 2) referral to local adoption related community trainings 3) linkage to local therapists with experience working with adoptive families 4) lending library and website access 5) quarterly newsletter which includes book reviews, and relevant adoption related information.

Education: Educational support groups and meetings are held twice a month and offer a variety of topics pertinent to adoption. In addition, access to the lending library and website offer many opportunities to learn more about adoption and the impact of adoption on all members of the triad (adoptive parents, adoptees and birth family).

Advocacy: We are here to help navigate common issues facing adoptive families. We assist adoptive parents with advocating for the assistance needed in working with educational, legislative and community partners to best meet their children's needs.

Crisis Intervention/Case Management: Participants are eligible to receive short-term therapeutic services, free of charge, by master's level social workers who are trained and experienced in adoption-related issues. Families are also eligible to receive in-home case management services as needed. Spanish translation services are provided.

Hope: We utilize our agency values of Respect, Integrity, Courage & Hope (RICH) to guide our work with adoptive families. Our goal is to promote safe, healthy and stable adoptive families through access to our services.