

# Los Angeles County DCFS Adoptions Division

## POST ADOPTION SERVICES NEWSLETTER

SUMMER/FALL 2007

ISSUE #10

### POST ADOPTION SERVICES MISSION STATEMENT

Post Adoption Services is committed to providing support and resources to adoptive parents, adoptees, and birth families as they face the lifelong issues of adoption.

### Gentle reminder...

Please remember that Post Adoption Services handles cases six months *after* they have legally finalized. Prior to that, any questions you have regarding your adoption or AAP should be directed to the adoptions CSW who was in charge of your case prior to finalization.

### A reunion story...

Many years ago, an adult adoptee contacted PAS requesting information about her birthparents. By the time PAS was able to respond to the adoptee's request, she had moved and PAS could not find her to provide her with the information she requested. The adoptee was born in the mid-1960s to a mother who had a long history of substance abuse, criminal activity, and endangering her children's well-being. The adoptee was removed from the birthmother due to neglect when she was very young. She remained in foster care for a few years until she was adopted when she was about five years old.

More than ten years after the adoptee contacted us, her birthmother did the same. Her birthmother filed a *Consent for Contact* form and indicated that wished to have contact with the daughter she had not seen for almost forty years. She said that she'd never stopped thinking about

her children. Because we were unable to provide any services to the adoptee so many years ago, PAS conducted a search and found the adoptee. We contacted her and provided her with the non-identifying information she had wanted about her birthparents and circumstances around her adoption. Her adoptive parents had never told her the full story on how she came to be adopted, and did not present to her the little information they did give her in a positive manner. The adoptee shared that she had struggled with these and other issues her whole life, and that her relationship with her adoptive parents was strained.

The adoptee mailed a notarized *Consent for Contact* form to PAS so that social worker could facilitate a reunion between her and her birth mother. The PAS worker had numerous lengthy conversations with both the adoptee and her birthmother regarding their many fears and concerns. Both had a lot of pain related to various events in their lives. They were both filled with different emotions at the prospect of forming a relationship with each other and were unsure what type of relationship they wanted from each other.

They eventually spoke on the phone and, since they lived in different States, they continued to communicate via telephone and e-mail. The adoptee was especially happy to learn that she had older biological siblings. The birthmother had searched and found two of them (who were also adopted), and put them in touch with the adoptee. The adoptee told the PAS worker that plans have been made for her to meet her birthmother and siblings. This reunion has been a "success" in that it seems to have answered many questions, helped along healing, and filled the hearts for all parties involved.

**Please call our PAS duty line at: (800) 735-4984 for more information about how PAS may be able to assist you in your reunion efforts.**

## DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE PAS ADOPTIVE PARENTS' SUPPORT GROUPS

We have support groups that meet on:

- The third Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. in **Los Angeles**.
- The third Wednesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. in **Pasadena**.
- The last Wednesday of every month at 10:00 a.m. in **Compton**.
- The first Thursday of every month at 10:00 a.m. in **Monterey Park** (please note this is a Spanish-speaking only group).
- Please note that if none of the above listed support groups are located in your area, Adoption Promotion and Support Services also offers support groups throughout Los Angeles County. Please call the PAS duty line for a referral and directions to a support group in your area.
- Please note that the PAS adoptive parents support group that had been meeting in the San Fernando Valley has been canceled indefinitely.

## Post Adoption Services Team

### ARAs:

Barry Ginsberg

Esther Herrera

### SCSWs:

Monica Biernet

Lorna Fibus

Selena McCurdy

### CSWs:

Vergel De La Cruz

Barbara McDermott

Myrna De La Cruz

Rita Nwabuzoh

Kay Ingram

Angelica Pettitt

Grace Kim

Clare Naughton

Margaret Lipton

Jennifer Nelson

Denise Lytle

Adam Tunick

### Support staff:

Marie Mosley

Don Offor

Volga Hatamian

# LIFEBOOKS

Creating an adoption lifebook is a valuable exercise adoptive parents can do with their children. It looks very similar to a photo album, but it is much more. An adoption lifebook is a book that adoptive parents and their adoptive children make together. It includes not only photographs, but the children's artwork, and narratives of the children's experiences prior to placement and throughout the process of their adoptions. It also includes memorabilia such as awards the adoptees may have received from school. Adoption lifebooks include information about adoptees' birth parents and gives a sensitive explanation as to why their birth parents were not able to raise them. Children who have experienced multiple placements prior to finding a permanent adoptive home may benefit from having the experience of putting a lifebook together with their adoptive parents. It is one way for parents to honor their children's life experiences. PAS has a book that offers parents a step-by-step explanation on how to create lifebooks with their children. The book is free. Please call the PAS duty line if you would like this book mailed to you.

**PAS DUTY LINE: 1-800-735-4984**