

# AFSA Outreach

## Adoptive Families Support Association

### March Meeting: Spring Ahead Party

Dust off your skis, ice skates, bathing suits, and track shoes! Our next AFSA meeting will be The Olympics! Due to the space constraints of our Garfield Heights location, we won't be able to have the high dive or the pole vault, but we will have some vigorous competitions with the DDR and a ping pong ball. There will be event stations set up along with prizes, medals, and the Parade of Nations.

AFSA will provide the main course of pizza as well as beverages. We ask each family to bring a snack or dessert to share.

So get ready to have fun and compete on March 14 at our usual Garfield Heights meeting location. We hope to see you there!



### April Meeting: Korean Culture Camp Reunion and Information Night

Have you ever wondered what Culture Camp is all about? What kind of activities there are at a Culture Camp? Or maybe you have attended AFSA's Korean Culture Camp and would like to see some of your friends before July. Please join us for our April meeting where we will highlight the AFSA-sponsored Korean Culture Camp (KCC.) **Paul Hartman**, director of KCC, will be at the meeting to give an informational presentation on the camp.

Past KCC campers are invited to attend and join other campers for a reunion.



*Counselors greet campers at KCC 2004*

March-April 2009

Volume 9, Issue 2

#### 2008-2009 Schedule

September 13	Movie Night
October 11	Birthparent Panel
November 8	Post-Adoption Support Programs
December 13	Holiday Party
January 10	AFSA Families Cook for the New Year
February 14	Adult Adoptee Panel
March 14	Spring Ahead Party
April 11	Korean Culture Camp Reunion
May 9	AFSA Cooks
June 13	Culture Night

#### Next Meeting

Saturday, March 14

\*\* 6:00 p.m. \*\*

#### "Spring Ahead Party"

Location:

Korean American  
Presbyterian Church of  
Cleveland  
9305 Midwest Ave.  
Garfield Heights

## March



### Birthdays

Theodora Bowne	7	3/31
Robin Cohen	14	3/20
Anna Fox	9	3/29
David Lehtinen	5	3/19
Sarah Neese	10	3/2
Andrew Powell	5	3/21
Emma Zordan	11	3/14



### Arrival Anniversaries

Magdalena Bowne	3/14/2005
Sarah Boyle	3/2/2005
David Corty	3/30/1996
Maggie Dissinger	3/9/1996
Emily Gisser	3/19/2002
Emily Mago	3/22/1997
Emily Schroeder	3/2/1998
Mayna Watson	3/4/2008

### Welcome Wagon

Welcome back to former AFSA members **Dan and Laura Phillips** and their children **Jason** and **Hannah**. The Phillips live in Berlin Heights so they certainly have a drive to get to AFSA meetings! Jason and Hanna were both born in South Korea. Welcome back!



## News and Notes

### Korean Culture Camp

Adoptive Families Support Association is proud to announce its twenty-first annual Culture Camp for Korean-American children. Camp will be held July 15-19 at the St. Leonard Youth Retreat Center in Avon, Ohio, about twenty miles west of downtown Cleveland.

The program is open to children ages seven (who have completed first grade) through seventeen years. Its purpose is to develop a positive self-image among Korean-American children. Through participation in games, crafts, and music, and exposure to the foods, language, and history of Korea, campers will develop a greater understanding and appreciation of their cultural heritage. We will also have plenty of regular camp activities such as games, sports, and a Saturday night campfire.

An adult staff of at least fourteen is planned: approximately nine Korean-American counselors and five AFSA parents. All campers sleep in dormitories with adult supervision and all meals are provided.

Camp fees are \$290 for the first child and \$225 for each additional child. Non-Korean siblings are welcome!

If you have any questions, please contact Paul or **Brenda Hartman** at (440) 729-2949 or via email at [brendalee99@adelphia.net](mailto:brendalee99@adelphia.net). We look forward to seeing your children at the AFSA Korean Culture Camp!



### Adoption Network Adoption Conference



The American Adoption Congress (AAC) and Adoption Network Cleveland present the 30th Annual ACC Conference Transforming Families, Connecting Lives to be held right here in Cleveland April 22-25 at the Hilton Garden Inn in downtown Cleveland. Adoption Network Cleveland will showcase their programs of support and advocacy for those touched by adoption. This annual conference provides a unique opportunity for professionals and non-professionals to learn from the experts!

Some of the keynote speakers are Senator Paula Benoit, speaking on adoption legislation concerning adoptees' rights to their original birth certificates, and Darryl "DMC" McDaniels, who will speak on his personal adoption story. There are workshops for all interests, including treating clinical issues in adoption, adoption and adolescence, and ethical issues in adoption. There will also be a panel on the media and adoption.

For more information, go to Adoption Network Cleveland's website at [www.adoptionnetwork.org](http://www.adoptionnetwork.org). You can also register online at [www.regonline.com/aacanc2009](http://www.regonline.com/aacanc2009)

## May Meeting Update: AFSA Families Cook

Unfortunately, our January meeting was snowed out! Therefore we are moving the January cooking session to our May 9 meeting. As in previous years, we will have demonstrations, recipes, and food to eat. Our chefs this year will be comprised of AFSA members and families. We will have three cooking presentations, with the opportunity to sample the delicious results. The AFSA members who will be cooking for us are **Tim Stafford; Kathy, Dan, and Emily Gisser; and Jennifer Sage.** Tim and Jennifer will be cooking Korean dishes and the Gisser clan is planning to demonstrate some dishes from Vietnam. Come prepared to sample each dish and take home the recipe to try later. We look forward to seeing you at our May meeting. Come prepared to have fun, learn a few culinary tricks, and eat!

## February Meeting Recap: Adult Adoptee Panel

The February meeting featured two adult adoptees discussing their experiences growing up adopted in Cleveland. Gillian Johns and Patty Solomon shared their perspectives on being adopted in transracial families. Ms. Johns grew up in a large family with siblings adopted from Korea as well as her parents' biological children. Despite the variety of origins of the children in her family, Ms. Johns' own racial background was not clear. She was told early on that her birthmother was Caucasian and her birthfather was from India, but later she learned that her birthfather was black. In her teens, she contacted her placement agency and was told that her birthfather was East Indian, but "not Negroid." When she was contacted by her birthmother, her birthmother identified her birthfather as African-American.



Ms. Johns identifies herself as African-American and biracial. As an English professor who teaches African-American literature, she is philosophical about the meaning of her experiences with a shifting identity. She commented that a lot has improved in the way adoptive families address issues of race.

Ms. Solomon also grew up in a large family with biological and adopted siblings, and she is also biracial. When she was growing up, her family did not talk about adoption. Her mother wanted each child to feel special, but not different.

Both Ms. Johns and Ms. Solomon grew up in communities where they were the only people of color and found that their families could have prepared them better for their school age experiences. When they were in grade school, they had to face the fact that people outside their families viewed them as different. People in their communities had difficulty with the idea that their families didn't look alike, or simply didn't like them because they were in a minority group. They both wished that their families had made more effort to incorporate their birth parents' cultures into the culture of their family. They also encouraged parents to talk about race at home so that our children will be more prepared to encounter

*(Continued on page 5)*

## April



### Birthdays

Sarah Dorn	4	4/14
Joe Fox	18	4/1
Bonnie Hartman	7	4/12
Jason Phillips	10	4/8
Joseph Tommasi	17	4/28



### Arrival Anniversaries

Daniel Escobedo	4/7/2004
Christopher Schroeder	4/27/1994

### April Meeting

Saturday, April 11

**\*\* 6:00 p.m. \*\***

### “KCC Reunion and Information Night”

Location:

Korean American Presbyterian  
Church of Cleveland  
9305 Midwest Ave.  
Garfield Heights

**Please bring a snack to share**

# Pick Up A Good Book

Winter is a terrific time to curl up with a good book. Looking for some adoption-related books? Here are some recommendations. Categories are included as a guideline, but parents are the best judges of what books their children are ready to read.

## For reading with young children

*I Wished for You—An Adoption Story* by Marianne Richmond

*The Best Single Mom in the World: How I Was Adopted* by Mary Zisk

*A Mother for Choco* by Keiko Kasza

*Did My First Mother Love Me? A Story for an Adopted Child* by Kathryn Ann Miller

*You're Not My Real Mother!* by Molly Friedrich

*Lucy's Family Tree* by Karen Halvorsen Schreck

*I Don't Have Your Eyes* by Carrie A. Kitze

*Tell Me Again About the Night I was Born* by Jamie Lee Curtis

*Chinese Eyes* by Marjorie Ann Waybill

*I Love You Like Crazy Cakes* by Rose Lewis

*Heart of Mine* by Dan Hojer

*Over the Moon: An Adoption Tale* by Karen Katz



## For kids to read alone or with parents

*Rain Forest Girl: More than an Adoption Story* by Chalise Miner

*Adoption is for Always* by Linda Walvoord Girard

*Monsoon Summer* by Mitali Perkins

*At Home in This Works, A China Adoption Story* by Jean MacLeod

*If it Hadn't Been for Yoon Jun* by Marie G. Lee

## For teens and adults

*Edgar Allen* by John Neufeld

*Find a Stranger, Say Good-Bye* by Lois Lowry

*How it Feels to Be Adopted* by Jill Krementz

*Why Didn't She Keep Me? Answers to the Question Every Adopted Child Asks* by Barbara Burlingham-Brown







These books were found at:

<http://www.comeunity.com/adoption/books/0children-adoption2.html>

<http://www.amazon.com/Best-Childrens-Books-About-Adoption/lm/2F98ZLQGA80SQ>

<http://www.adoptionbooks.com/childresults.cfm>

## Calendar of Events 2008-2009

- September 13**  **Movie Night.** We will be watching & discussing the movie, “First Person Plural”—a documentary shown on PBS about a Korean-American adoptee’s struggle to unravel the mysteries surrounding her adoption ([www.pbs.org/pov/povf2000/firstpersonplural/program/synopsis.html](http://www.pbs.org/pov/povf2000/firstpersonplural/program/synopsis.html))
- October 11**  **Birth parent Panel.** A panel of birthparents generously share their stories and talk to AFSA families about their experiences as birthparents. Past birthparent panels have been one of our most popular AFSA meeting topics.
- November 8**  **Post-Adoption Support Programs.** Victor Groza, PhD, Brody Professor of Parent-Child Studies at Case Western Reserve University is an internationally recognized expert in transracial adoption. Come hear him talk about his post-adoption program, Adoption PARTners.
- December 13**  **Holiday Party.** Join us for holiday fun! Food, games, and perhaps a visit from you-know-who!
- January 10**  **AFSA Families Cook for the New Year.** Join AFSA kids (and their parent helpers!) as they show us some special recipes to celebrate the western New Year and prepare for the Lunar New Year.
- February 14**  **Adult Adoptee Panel.** A panel of adult adoptees share their stories and talk to AFSA families about their experiences growing up as adopted children. This is one of our most popular meeting topics.
- March 14** **Spring Ahead Party.** Back by popular demand...as we move the clocks ahead, it is time for another AFSA party. Food, fun, and games. Bingo, anyone?
- April 11** **Korean Culture Camp Reunion and Information Night.** Join us as we have an informational presentation about AFSA-supported Korean Culture Camp. We also invite prior KCC campers to come for a reunion.
- May 9** **AFSA Families Cook.** This program replaces the snowed-out January cooking demonstration. Come to watch and learn...and eat, of course.
- June 13** **Culture Night.** We end our AFSA year, as always, with our annual Culture Night, featuring food from around the world, games, and entertainment.

## February Meeting Recap

*(Continued from page 3)*

racism in the world.

College was a turning point for both Ms. Johns and Ms. Solomon, and a place where they found the African-American communities. Ms. Solomon commented that her biracial looks (paler skin and green eyes) and her previous experiences in an all-white community initially made it hard for her to be accepted into the African-American community on campus.

Ms. Solomon talked about having different “seasons” in her life, when searching for her birthparents was more or less important to her, and when issues of race and identity were more or less important. Ms. Johns talked about her mother continuing to be engaged in understanding her daughter’s racial identity well into Ms. Johns’ adulthood. Both speakers emphasized that supportive parenting and the need to talk about adoption and race are a lifelong commitment for adoptive parents.

AFSA would like to thank Adoption Network Cleveland for helping us locate these two outstanding speakers.

- Kathy Gisser

