

# VERMONT Adoption Consortium

## Celebrate Adoption!

### Special Issue November 2014



November is National Adoption Month! It is during this month that families, businesses, and communities celebrate adoption in a positive way. National Adoption Day, traditionally the Saturday before Thanksgiving, is a day where courthouses across the country observe thousands of adoptions finalized at the same time.

It all started in 1976 with the idea of a state-wide Adoption Week announced by then-governor of Massachusetts, Michael Dukakis. His goal was to promote awareness of the need for adoptive families for children in foster care. In 1984, it was President Ronald Reagan that proclaimed the first National Adoption Week. Adoption advocates realized, however, that more

time was needed to raise awareness about the need for adoptive families and to hold adoption related events. In response, in 1995, President Clinton expanded the awareness week to the entire month of November.

In last year's proclamation, President Obama started off National Adoption Month with these words:  
*"Every young person deserves the chance to learn and grow under the care of a loving family. Across our Nation, adoptive families give that chance to over a million children and teenagers. During National Adoption Month, we celebrate these families and stand alongside every child still looking for the warmth and stability of a permanent home."*



### The One Day Project

This year it is expected that 4,500 children will be adopted on November 22, 2014. The day an adoption is finalized is unforgettable for families. The National Adoption Day Coalition created **The One Day Project** to share what this "one day" feels like. Families who have adopted children have submitted stories and videos of their experiences and you can view these online at: [www.nationaladoptionday.org](http://www.nationaladoptionday.org)

# Presidential Proclamation

President Barack Obama

NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH, 2014  
BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



## A PROCLAMATION

Every year, adoptive parents welcome tens of thousands of children and teenagers into supportive and loving families. These mothers and fathers provide their sons and daughters with the security and stability of a safe environment and the opportunity to learn, grow, and achieve their full potential. During National Adoption Month, we honor those who have opened their hearts and their homes, and we recommit to supporting all children still in need of a place to call their own.

Over the past decade, more than 500,000 children have been adopted. However, there are still too many children waiting to be part of an adoptive family. This month -- on the Saturday before Thanksgiving -- we will observe the 15th annual National Adoption Day, a nationwide celebration that brings together policymakers, practitioners, and advocates to finalize thousands of adoptions and to raise awareness of those still in need of permanent homes.

To help ensure there is a permanent home for every child, my Administration is investing in programs to reduce the amount of time children in foster care wait for adoption and to educate adoptive families about the diverse needs of their children, helping ensure stability and permanency. We are equipping State and local adoption organizations with tools to provide quality mental health services to children who need them, and -- because we know the importance of sibling relationships -- we are encouraging efforts to keep brothers and sisters together. Additionally, last year I was proud to permanently extend the Adoption Tax Credit to provide relief to adoptive families. By supporting policies that remove barriers to adoption, we give hope to children across America. For all those who yearn for the comfort of family, we must continue our work to increase the opportunities for adoption and make sure all capable and loving caregivers have the ability to bring a child into their life, regardless of their race, religion, sexual orientation, or marital status.

Throughout November, we recognize the thousands of parents and kids who have expanded their families to welcome a new child or sibling, as well as the professionals who offer guidance, resources, and counseling every day. Let us reaffirm our commitment to provide all children with every chance to reach their dreams and realize their highest aspirations.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 2014 as National Adoption Month. I encourage all Americans to observe this month by answering the call to find a permanent and caring family for every child in need, and by supporting the families who care for them.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirty-first day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand fourteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-ninth.

*Barack Obama*

# State of Vermont Proclamation

Governor Peter Shumlin

## State of Vermont Executive Department A Proclamation

**WHEREAS**, the state of Vermont recognizes the importance of giving children permanent, safe and loving families through adoption; and

**WHEREAS**, more than 101,000 in the United States foster care system are awaiting to be adopted, and

**WHEREAS**, approximately 196 children in Vermont are waiting for permanent families; and

**WHEREAS**, to help these children find permanent, nurturing families, courts across Vermont will open their doors on National Adoption Day, Saturday, November 22, to finalize the adoptions of local children and join other organizations to celebrate all adoptions; and

**WHEREAS**, this effort, along with similar celebrations in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, will offer children the chance to live with stable and loving families and encourage other dedicated individuals to make a powerful difference in the lives of a child through adoption; and

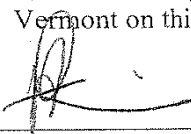
**WHEREAS**, Vermont's future depends on today's children, and it is important to involve the media, private and public agencies, adoptive parents, advocacy groups, civic and church groups, and businesses in providing publicity and information to heighten community awareness of the crucial needs of these children and all of those who work tirelessly to place them in loving families;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Peter Shumlin, Governor, do hereby proclaim November 22, 2014 as

### ADOPTION DAY

in the State of Vermont.

Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of Vermont on this 11<sup>th</sup> day of September, A.D. 2014



Peter Shumlin  
Governor



# A Story about Adoption

One of my sons was adopted from an orphanage in another country about 30 years ago. It was a year ago when he put his hand on my shoulder and, in front of his older brother, said, "If it weren't for you, I probably wouldn't be alive today. I certainly wouldn't have grown up in a fine and caring family – gone on to graduate from UVM – gotten a good job as a design engineer in Boston and bought a house. Thanks!" As embarrassing as those words were at the time, I have never forgotten them. I feel that even if you never hear the same words from your adopted child, the thoughts expressed above are similar to those each adopted child is most likely feeling inside, but sometimes can't articulate. Keep up the great work!

I have been affiliated as an administrator and now as a board member of Good Beginnings of Central Vermont, an organization that works with new parents of birth and adopted infants in central Vermont. In this program, trained volunteer mothers of all ages are matched with new parents to provide home visits for several hours each week for up to three months or longer. During this time, volunteers encourage families in bonding, carrying of child (with help from Babywearers of Central Vermont), literacy, fatherhood, and music enrichment. Resources are always provided as needed for each family as well as opportunities for activities, most importantly for fathers. Good Beginnings offers services for free and they are open to all regardless of income or other circumstances. As a board member, I can say that we appreciate our affiliation with the Vermont Adoption Consortium and look forward to continued enrichment of services to support families.

*Sara C. Nevin*  
Northfield, VT



## Family Photo Celebration

Please join LUND in celebrating National Adoption Month

**FREE** Family Photo Shoot

When: November 20th 4:00 - 7:00 pm

Location: LUND, 50 Joy Drive, Burlington

RSVP to Heather Simmons (802) 864-7467 or (802) 324-0939

Snacks will be provided



# At the Movies



## MOVIE REVIEW

By Stacia Wright,  
Easter Seals

***Girl, Adopted*** is a documentary about a young teenage girl

named Weynsht who is adopted from Ethiopia by a family from Arkansas. This powerful film follows Weynsht from living in an orphanage to living with her adoptive family. It covers the various mixed feelings that she experiences around race, culture, adoption, her sense of self, and her sense of belonging.

In the documentary, Weynsht returns to Ethiopia with her adoptive family just two years after her adoption and it is surprising what a culture shock it seems to be for her. She returns with the expectation that she will feel right at home, find her birth family, and want to stay in Ethiopia, but she is faced with the harsh reminder of what life is like there. During her visit she learns that she has a birth brother that is several years older than her, but has mixed feelings about meeting him. She is also surprised by how the people at the orphanage and her older foster mother in Ethiopia see her as "Americanized" and she struggles with feelings of not belonging to either culture.

I would recommend this film for any family or professional working with a family that has adopted internationally, particularly if a visit to the child's birth country is being planned. This film depicts the adoption journey from the child's point of view, and explores the feelings that may arise from any adoptive child's experience of visiting their birth home.

Deb Wood, an adoptive parent, recently borrowed the DVD from VAC and wrote this: *"The film is REMARKABLE!!! So very good!!! I have a son and he is the male version of her. How I wish I had the funds to bring him back to Liberia just so he could reconnect with his homeland and build upon his "story of adoption". Many families will be encouraged by this film. It captures the essence and necessity of "time"."*

**Borrow this DVD from the  
Vermont Adoption Consortium Library today!**

*New at the VAC Library:*

## CLOSURE

**A Documentary About Adoption**

By Brian Tucker



This is the story of Angela Tucker and her search for her roots. Angela was adopted at age one into a large multi-racial family. Filmed by her husband over a two-year span, Angela's poignant journey leads her across the country where she meets family members who did not know she had been born.

## FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT

Watching a movie is a great way to spend time together. Here are some adoption themed movies that the whole family will want to watch:

*Lilo and Stitch*

*The Prince of Egypt*

*Anne of Green Gables*

*Stuart Little*

*Elf*

*Annie*

*Tarzan*

*Babe*

*The Rescuers*

*Kung Fu Panda 2*



*Angels in the Outfield*



# VERMONT Adoption Consortium

## *Celebrate National Adoption Month* **November 2014**

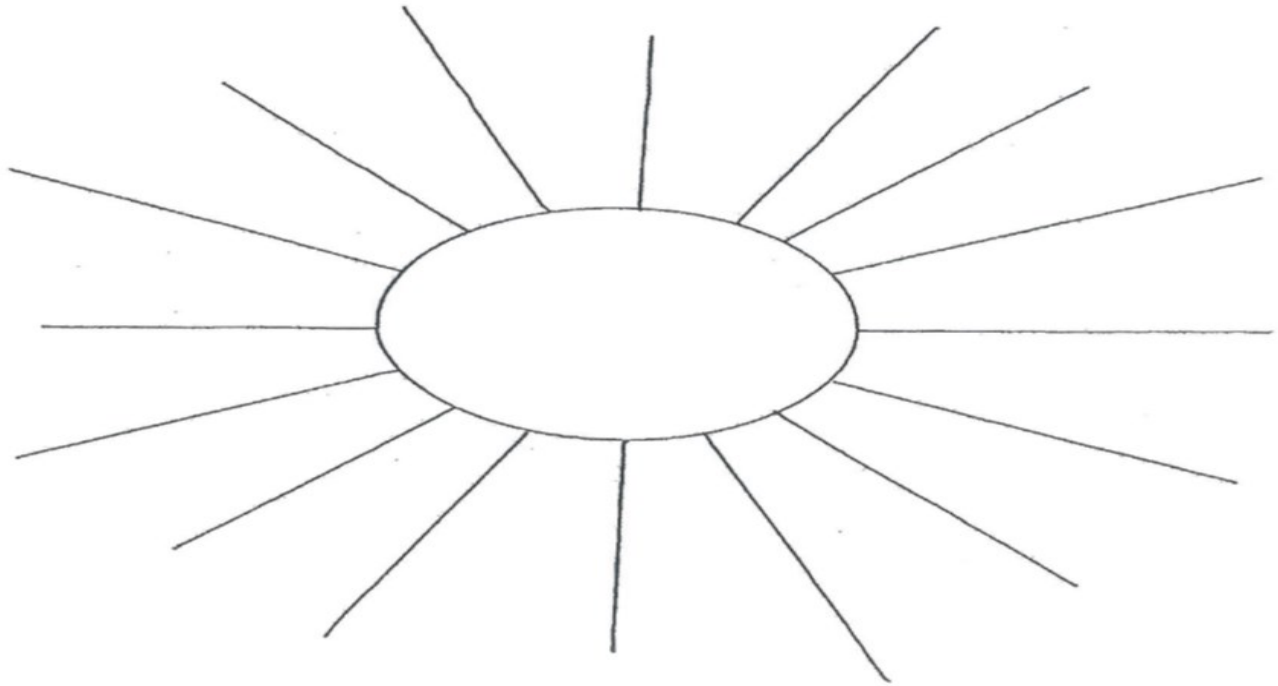
This month is all about celebrating how each of our families were formed.  
What are you planning to do? Here are some ideas to get your family started on the celebration!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 'Like' National Adoption Day on Facebook to stay current on all activities.	3 Email family & friends and tell them about National Adoption Month!	4 Give your child/children an extra hug today!	5 Re-tell your child his/her adoption story.	6 Look into a support group: <a href="http://Vtadoption.org">Vtadoption.org</a>	7 Ask your library to display books about adoption.	8 Stay updated—subscribe to an adoption magazine or e-newsletter.
9 Draw or paint a photo of your family.	10 Borrow a book from the Vt. Adoption Consortium Library.	11 Explore your child's heritage through music.	12 Share a cherished childhood memory or tradition	13 Listen to someone's adoption story.	14 Learn more about positive adoption language.	15 Make an alternative family tree using the templates provided in this newsletter
16 Cook a meal that reflects your family's heritage.	17 Write a thank you letter to someone who shows support for adoption.	18 Take a family walk.	19 Thank your school support team for their efforts with your child.	20 Have your FREE family photo taken at LUND. 4—7:00 pm	21 Check out: <a href="http://NationalAdoptionDay.org">NationalAdoptionDay.org</a>	22 
23 Email your stories about how you celebrated! <a href="mailto:Leanne.lachance@partner.State.vt.us">Leanne.lachance@partner.State.vt.us</a>	24 Thank your Post Permanency worker for all they do!	25 Consider donating a book about adoption to your local or school library.	26 Light candles to remember children who are waiting for families.	27 <b>Have a Happy Thanksgiving!</b>	28 Make a tree ornament that reflects the heritage of your family members.	29 Spend time working on a lifebook for yourself or your child
30 Watch a movie with an adoption theme.						

# My Family

Use these templates to make a family tree with your children.

## MY FAMILY *people who make me shine*



## MY FAMILY CONSTELLATION

*people who star in my life*

