



VERMONT CONSORTIUM

for **ADOPTION & GUARDIANSHIP**

Support—Information—Education

Winter NEWSLETTER 2019/2020



I'm
thankful for.....

In this issue....

- Celebrating National Adoption Month
- What are we thankful for?
- Keeping our children safe in a digital world
- Play as a resilience builder
- Families share their stories and pictures
- And so much more!

[Adoption] carries the added dimension of connection not only to your own tribe but beyond, widening the scope of what constitutes love, ties, and family. It is the larger embrace.

—Isabella Rossellini

Celebrate National Adoption Month by taking or scheduling an adoption training!

Welcome to the Vermont Consortium's Winter 2019/2020 Newsletter!

November is National Adoption Month—and the month when we celebrate the harvest and thankfulness. It's a time when I pause and reflect on all that I am grateful for, including the many ways that adoption has impacted my life. For me—as for many—it's multigenerational. I had a great-aunt who was a birth parent, and who hid this information for most of her life, I have cousins who joined my Uncle's family through adoption, and I have children who joined my family through adoption. Reflecting on the changes in attitudes over these decades makes me take a deep breath—we've come a long way in our thinking about birth parents and their role in the lives of the children who were adopted, and there's still lots of room for movement. In Vermont we still have families who struggle to tell their children that they have joined their family through adoption; others who become awkward or uncomfortable when talking about adoption, leaving their children wondering if there is something wrong with them that they were adopted; and still other families where these conversations flow freely and the children



can ask all of their questions without hesitating. I think back to a panel of young adult adoptees who, when asked about when to tell a child they are adopted each, in turn, said “from the day the child joins your family”—none of them remembered a time that they didn't know their adoption story—and they all appreciated their parents' openness with them.

Adoption is just one more way to form a family and I certainly feel thankful for my boisterous, loving, busy family—formed through adoption, birth, guardianship, and step parenting!

Adoption is just one more way to form a family and I certainly feel thankful for my boisterous, loving, busy family—formed through adoption, birth, guardianship, and step parenting!

Catherine Harris



Please consider sharing pictures of your family with the greater community of Vermont families formed through adoption or guardianship. We want to join you in celebrating your wonderful family—playing and working together, as well as those special occasions you celebrate.

Your family pictures would add a lot to future Consortium Newsletters and to the website. Please forward them electronically to: vtadoption@vermont.gov

And feel free to add a few words or provide a story to accompany the pictures!



Celebrate National Adoption Month by taking or scheduling an adoption training!

Celebrating Adoption Month in Vermont—November 2019

November is National Adoption Month—honoring the many families formed through adoption throughout our country. On November 20th Lund hosted an event to celebrate this at their offices in South Burlington. Ken Schatz, Commissioner of the Department for Children and Families, attended the event celebrating and thanking the families for their partnership. Children and their families enjoyed the activities—making slime, creating a sand tray, dancing to African music, Bal-A-Vis-X, a scavenger hunt, face painting, eating pizza, having family portraits taken, and more! And for many of the families who attended this wasn't their first time at this celebration—this has



DCF Commissioner Ken Schatz having his face painted by Kate Rooney, Lund, at the celebration.

become a family tradition and one of the ways they celebrate National Adoption Month! Thanks to the staff from Lund and DCF: Project Family, Post Permanency Services, Private Adoption, administrative staff and the volunteers who made this evening a success!



Celebrate National Adoption Month by taking or scheduling an adoption training!

Parenting in the Digital Age—Keeping our Children Safe

By Danna Bare, Post Permanency Worker, Lund

Technology is a fact of modern life. In today's digital frontier, most parents are struggling to monitor their child and/or teen's screentime use and safety. We are the first generation of parents who have faced navigating and monitoring such pervasive new information and social media sources that are available every day, all day.

From easy access pornography on the internet to apps that make conversations and photos disappear after 10 seconds, parents are tasked with the challenge of understanding and monitoring rapid changes in technology that most kids carry around in their pocket.

The resource section at the end of this article provides website links for parents to learn more about screentime guidelines, how to create a family media contract, find out what kind of parent controls exist and how you can use them, and why you should be aware of what apps and games children and teens are accessing and their risks. Given that a middle schooler averages 7.5 hours of screentime each day, 91% of



teens access the internet on a phone or other device, and children's average age of receiving their first cell phone is 10.3 years (Adoption Learning Partners.com), parents need to know what their children are accessing and how to block and manage content streaming through their children's phones and other devices for both emotional and physical safety.

In addition to general safety considerations, children and teens who are adopted face added concerns around social media usage. Social media has changed the face of adoption in America in both positive and negative ways.

Adoption has benefited from social media through easier recruitment of families, increased adoption information and awareness, easier access to local and national support systems for adoptive parents, access to birth family search when people who are adopted are ready to search, as well as providing manageable and non-threatening contact with birth parents and birth families for both adoptees and adoptive parents when contact is desired. However, a negative impact of social media for youth who are adopted is easy access to searching for information about birth family as well as unexpected contact from birth family before a child or teen is ready. Whether you chose a closed or open adoption or something in between, kids can now easily access information on their own about birth parents and birth family and can just as easily be contacted by birth family on social media platforms. (continued on next page)

Celebrate National Adoption Month by taking or scheduling an adoption training!

Parenting in the Digital Age—Keeping our Children Safe (continued)

What can parents do?

As well as using monitoring and blocking technologies now available to parents (see resources below), the most important thing you can do is have open and honest conversations with your teen or tween or any child with access to the internet about birth family contact issues. Validate your child's natural and normal interest in birth family and take a curious and supportive stance as you discuss their interest. Encourage any search activity be done together as a family so that you are present to help navigate difficult information and urges to make contact.

Encourage your child to come to you if birth family contacts them so that you can help them decide if they want to respond and how or if they want to wait. The traditional age for a youth who is adopted to make a birth family search is eighteen. You can ask your child why they think that 18 is the traditional time a child searches for birth family as a way of including them in the conversation and showing them that you are both open to conversation and listening deeply to their desires and concerns. When a youth does not feel seen and heard by those they depend on for their survival, they are apt to revert to a survival state where their fear brain is activated and they are not operating from their wise brain, thus making impulsive and dangerous choices. Your job is to slow them down, connect, validate their interest and process together next steps. You can explain that the traditional time to search is eighteen because they are more developed and better able to handle possibly difficult information about their birth family. It is also challenging for a youth to navigate the challenges of an additional set of family during the already tumultuous time of adolescence. The youth may not be ready for possible rejection by birth family or may impulsively make contact and then regret the door they have opened. Further, not all children who are adopted want contact with birth family due to birth family abuse or neglect.



If your child comes to you and says birth family has contacted them, give heartfelt appreciation for your child coming to you first. Make sure that the person contacting your child is who they say they are as youth today are actively targeted by human traffickers posing as other teens or persons known to them. Then let your child know that you can decide together what is best for them while navigating with them any responses to birth family contact. Let them know that their voice will always be heard in the discussion on birth family.

(continued on next page)

Celebrate National Adoption Month by taking or scheduling an adoption training!

Parenting in the Digital Age—Keeping our Children Safe (continued)

More open adoptions can be challenged by social media when a child sees posts by birth parents or other birth family that the youth finds scary or confusing or seeing information about children their birth parents may be currently raising. Keep lines of communication open with your child and let them know that you are there to help them navigate any information they have found.

Remember that it is okay not to give a quick answer. You can say, “let me think about that first and we can talk about it Thursday” or whatever concrete timeframe you can provide. You can reach out to adoption competent helpers like your post-permanence service provider or therapist or other experienced adoptive parents to craft a response. Remind your child that your job is to protect them and you are listening to their perspective and you will find a solution together.

When a device is first purchased, let your child know that you will have all passwords to the device and sites visited, create a family use and media safety plan contract (see resources below), have devices charged in a common area at night and do not allow phones or devices in rooms of older youth after a certain time so that youth are not getting themselves into situations at night that they are not equipped to handle, and never leave a younger child unsupervised with internet access. Let your child know you will do random phone checks and that devices are monitored NOT because you don’t trust them but that there are risks and dangers on the internet that you are protecting them from through safety protocols. If you believe safety has been compromised by unknown adults contacting your child, call your local police station to report the incidents as most if not all sheriff and police departments have specialists on staff to investigate online criminal activity.

While it is normal for teens to want independence from parents, social media dangers are real and warrant parent oversight of social media life. As your teen matures and shows consistent digital responsibility, a parent can monitor their activity less frequently.

The natural antidote to too much screentime and social media usage is to engage your child and/or teen in life—face to face playdates and experiences with peers, outdoor activities with family, afterschool programming, clubs, sports and face to face socialization opportunities.

Resources start on the next page—



Celebrate National Adoption Month by taking or scheduling an adoption training!

Parenting in the Digital Age—Keeping our Children Safe (continued)

Resources:

Some American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations for ScreenTime:

- For children younger than 18 months, avoid use of screen media other than video-chatting.
- Parents of children 18 to 24 months of age who want to introduce digital media should choose high-quality programming, and watch it with their children to help them understand what they're seeing.
- For children ages 2 to 5 years, limit screen use to 1 hour per day of high-quality programs. Parents should co-view media with children to help them understand what they are seeing and apply it to the world around them.
- For children ages 6 and older, place consistent limits on the time spent using media, and the types of media, and make sure media does not take the place of adequate sleep, physical activity and other behaviors essential to health.
- Designate media-free times together, such as dinner or driving, as well as media-free locations at home, such as bedrooms.

Have ongoing communication about online citizenship and safety, including treating others with respect online and offline.

<https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/American-Academy-of-Pediatrics-Announces-New-Recommendations-for-Childrens-Media-Use.aspx>



Great bulleted handouts from Children and Screens:

General Guidelines for Parents (2 pages)—

<https://d1oclgbf4bbu9h.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/general-guidelines-for-parents.pdf>

Guidelines for Parents by Topic (13 pages)--

<https://d1oclgbf4bbu9h.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/general-guidelines-by-topic.pdf>

7 Steps to good digital parenting:

<https://www.fosi.org/good-digital-parenting/seven-steps-good-digital-parenting/>

Best parent sites to keep aware of new social media and technology trends that are always changing, including info on various apps, tv and movies, video games, and technology safety:

<https://www.common sense media.org/>

www.screenagersmovie.com

Continued on next page

Celebrate National Adoption Month by taking or scheduling an adoption training!

Parenting in the Digital Age—Keeping our Children Safe (continued)



Guide to parental controls for both home based devices and mobile devices—parents can control screentime, block sites, and monitor web usage on children’s devices and phones from the parent’s cellphone:

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/parents-ultimate-guide-to-parental-controls>

You can search commonsensemedia.org for how to set privacy and child safety controls on Facebook, netflix, Nintendo Switch (and other gaming systems), Instagram, etc as well as how to use Internal Apple iphone screentime and safety controls and what safety features are available for Android users.

<https://www.screenagersmovie.com/parenting-apps>

Best rated parent third party control apps to monitor web content and screentime

www.commensensemedia.org and
www.screenagersmovie.com

For most up to date reviews:

NetNanny
Qustodio
Bark
Webwatcher



<https://www.consumersadvocate.org/parental-control-apps/a/best-parental-control-apps>

Also, check with your internet or cell phone provider to see what parental controls are available through their service, often with no additional fees.

Screentime and Family safety agreement ideas, templates, and information:

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/How-to-Make-a-Family-Media-Use-Plan.aspx>

<https://www.screenagersmovie.com/contracts>

continued on next page

Celebrate National Adoption Month by taking or scheduling an adoption training!

Parenting in the Digital Age—Keeping our Children Safe (continued)

Apps that parents should be aware of that their teens or younger may be using, including apps where conversations and photos “disappear” after 10 seconds or kids chat with random strangers either through text or video:

<https://www.common sense media.org/blog/16-apps-and-websites-kids-are-heading-to-after-facebook>

<https://www.common sense media.org/blog/snapchat-kik-and-6-more-iffy-messaging-apps-teens-love>

<https://www.goerie.com/entertainmentlife/20171109/popular-kids-apps-to-watch-out-for>

<https://www.common sense media.org/blog/apps-to-watch-out-for-in-2019>

Sources:

Adoption Learning Partners webinar “Social Media and the Adopted Child”

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/intro/social-media-adoption/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2015/may/23/how-social-networking-sites-threaten-the-security-of-adopted-children>

Siegel, D. (2012). Adoptive families: How Facebook is revolutionizing the post-adoptive experience. *Social Work Today*, 12, 5. Access at:

<http://www.socialworktoday.com/archive/091712p22.shtml>

“The natural antidote to too much screentime and social media usage is to engage your child and/or teen in life....”



Celebrate National Adoption Month by taking or scheduling an adoption training!



I am so thankful for the opportunity I had to build a relationship with my biological father. I found him through a series of events that could only be described as fate, and that day he called me for the first time, my heart felt whole and happy and excited beyond words. We talked for almost two years, twice a week, for hours at a time and he shared his life with me. He was eventually able to tell me the story behind my birth and adoption. He was honest, and at



times what he shared was hard to hear, but again, I am so grateful to know and to have had a chance to know him. Through our talks I realized how similar he was to my adoptive father, and while they never met in person, I know they would have made great friends. Lisa D.

October 5th will be the anniversary of my husband's 8 year battle with lung cancer. Given 3 months to live without treatment back in 2011, He just wanted more time with our son (15yo at that time) & daughter (4 yo at that time). With treatment and medication the impossible happened and here we are 8 years later. We continue to pray for time and we are grateful for all the moments, laughter, hugs, kisses, & smiles we have been able to enjoy together as a family.

We are grateful for family and love. Becky G

So, I'm thankful for the usual: my family, friends and all of the good people I come in contact with. I'm also thankful for the Consortium for Adoption and Guardianship, and particularly, for its long standing offerings of support and education around cultural and racial aspects of adoption and guardianship. Karen H

I am thankful for good friends and a wonderful, big family. Catherine



Celebrate National Adoption Month by taking or scheduling an adoption training!

Vermont Department for Children and Families and Lund Received the 2019 Drenda Lakin National Adoption Award

Barbara Joyal, System of Care Unit Director, Department for Children and Families, Family Services Division and Wanda Audette, Director of Adoption, Lund, received the Drenda Lakin National Adoption Award in Washington, D.C. on November 13th in recognition of the private-public partnership between DCF and Lund. Since the inception of this partnership in 2000 Project Family has finalized 2910 adoptions for children in state custody.

Most recently DCF and Lund partnered together on the National Quality Improvement Center for Adoption/Guardianship Support and Preservation. Working in close partnership through this initiative, these two agencies developed and disseminated a survey that ultimately went out to 1,470 families across Vermont. DCF and Lund took the results from these surveys to create data reports for the different regions in the state. They brought together all of the community service providers in each region who might work with an adoptive child and/or family and discussed the results from the surveys to determine how they could change service



provisions in that area to better support children and families. DCF and Lund have committed to continuing to send out periodic surveys to all adoptive families so that they can stay in close contact with them and obtain information that will help to improve service delivery.

This award was created by *Voice for Adoption* in honor of Drenda S. Lakin, former Director of the National Resource Center for Special Needs Adoption. A staunch advocate for children and youth, Drenda spent over 30 years advocating for the adoption of waiting children with special needs.

The **Vermont Consortium for Adoption and Guardianship** invites you to contribute to strengthening and building the adoption/guardianship communities of Vermont by joining a committee!

- ◆ **Conference Planning and Training**
 - ◆ Contribute to the design and dissemination of our “Creating Adoption Sensitive Schools” and “Talking with your Children about Adoption” trainings
- ◆ **Diversity in Adoption**
 - ◆ Contribute to the design and dissemination of our transracial/transcultural trainings and help with creating additional trainings
- ◆ **Library**
 - ◆ Assist with the usability of the library and get the word out about this amazing resource

For more information email Catherine Harris at (802) 241-0901 or email catherine.harris@vermont.gov

Celebrate National Adoption Month by taking or scheduling an adoption training!

The Slayton Family

We became a licensed foster home in 2011.

I was asked to provide a home for a child that was receiving services where I worked. The decision to do this "one time request" by a co-worker has entirely changed our lives. Since that time we have adopted a set of siblings. Both have Autism. They came to us years apart. We are celebrating the 7th year of the first of these siblings joining our family and his 4th "adoptaversary" this year. We are also celebrating the 4th year of his sister joining our family, and In November we celebrate her 2nd "adoptaversary".

I wish I could express what this has done to enrich our lives. All of our kids have grown so much, both emotionally and physically since we made the decision to share our home. We are grateful to have been given the chance to expand our family and it's horizons, even though we never planned for any of it!

Happy November and Happy National Adoption Month!

Heather Slayton



Creating an Adoption Sensitive School

Schools can experience challenges when working with children who have joined their families through adoption or guardianship.

The VT Consortium for Adoption &

Guardianship offers a FREE 2-hour training to assist school staff in more effectively meeting children's learning needs.

Encourage your school to schedule a training!

email vtadoption@vermont.gov or call 802-241-0901

Celebrate National Adoption Month by taking or scheduling an adoption training!

Play as a Resilience Builder!!

By Amy Bielawski-Branch, LICSW

As grownups we often think of play as something unnecessary – something extra – something only for children. And even when we think of children playing, we don't always give it the significance it deserves. The truth is that PLAY is really important for children's development. As Mr. Rogers used to say: *“Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning, but for children play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood.”*

Adults playing with children is a simple and straightforward way to connect with the children in your life AND it is a way for them to build resilience and heal from the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACE's). Playing with children also taps into these 3 Core Principles which help children & families thrive:

- Strengthen Core Life Skills
- Support Responsive Relationships
- Reduce Sources of Stress



In this video (8 minutes), from the [Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University](#), you will "learn more about how play can foster children's resilience to hardship, and how the complex interactions involved when children play help build their brains."



Video link: <https://youtu.be/pjoyBZYk2zI>

As caregivers we can also incorporate important lessons in to play. Watch this 2 minute long video with Elmo, Colbie Caillat and Common as they teach about self-regulation through belly breathing. Younger children will love watching this!!!

Video link: https://youtu.be/_mZbzDOpylA

For additional information on play with older children, click on this link for an article from Futures without Violence, called "Everyday Magic: 16 Ways Adults Can Support Children Exposed to Violence and Trauma." <https://s3.amazonaws.com/fwvcorp/wp-content/uploads/20160121113502/Everyday-Magic-16-Ways-Adult-Can-Support-Children-2015.pdf>

Celebrate National Adoption Month by taking or scheduling an adoption training!

This is Me – Kayleigh Putnam

Last year I blogged about being adopted. This time I have something even more amazing to blog about. The day after my 16th birthday, my birth mom, Tracey, sent my mom a message on Facebook. I hadn't seen my birth mom since I was 6 months old and although my Mom sent her letters and pictures they came back moved, return to sender, no forwarding address. I hadn't heard from my birth mom for nearly 16 years. I have always wondered about Tracey. My Mom told me she was a kind, funny and beautiful person with lots of freckles like me. But my 16- year-old self was curious and I wanted to know more.



When my Mom told me my birth mom had contacted her, I was surprised, nervous, and excited. Any emotion you could ever think of came rushing into my head all at once. My Mom told me the reason Tracey hadn't contacted me was that she was afraid that we would be upset about something Tracey had to tell us. And here it is: Tracey had a daughter 3 years after me, a daughter she had kept and raised. At first, I was confused. I've had another sister for the last 13 years but I didn't know it. I've missed 13 years of knowing my biological sister. That made me sad. But then I realized I had received an amazing gift. I have a connection out in this big world. I have a sister. I have a 13-year-old sister and her name is Rachael.

Rachael has always known about me, but I knew nothing about her. My Mom sent Tracey my Instagram account info so Rachael and I could talk, and I found out so much about her. We both play volleyball, we both like the same kind of ice cream, and we both were so excited to meet. She had always been my sister but now she was my friend too.

That summer my mom found out that Rachael would be visiting a relative in Rhode Island for a few weeks. My Mom asked me if I wanted to meet her. Did I want to meet my sister? Of course I wanted to meet my sister! My Mom contacted my birth mom who arranged for us to meet my sister and my Aunt at a local restaurant. I was so excited and so nervous. I remember standing in front of the mirror and changing my outfit at least 10 times in order to find the perfect one. I was going to meet my sister after all, everything had to be perfect. I first saw my Aunt. Her first words were "Can I give you a hug?" I hugged her and then met Rachael. The first thing I noticed were her freckles, exactly like mine. She was shorter than me, and looked younger, but we looked almost like the same person. I knew I loved her from the second I met her.

When we left I cried. My mom asked if I was okay and I said "I just love her so much!" After meeting Rachael and my aunt, I also met my cousins,

(continued on next page)

Celebrate National Adoption Month by taking or scheduling an adoption training!

This is Me – Kayleigh Putnam (continued)

- my grandmother Abba, and my uncle. I had heard about my Abba and seen her photo holding me as a baby, but I never imagined I would get to meet her one day. And I did. It was amazing. I am thankful every day that my Mom and Dad chose an open adoption. I have so many connections out there that I'm just now learning about: a sister, an aunt, a grandmother, and another mom. It's now a year later and I've met Tracey... but that's a whole other story.



The Consortium is Thankful for Sayon Camara Drumming

When the drum head of one of our post permanency Djembe drums split we weren't sure what we could do—options for fixing a traditional African drum were likely to be few and far between in Vermont. Luckily we have JoAnn Turner, post permanency worker with Easter Seals, who was determined to find a way to get the drum repaired. She has been using the drums in her work with families and finds this type of repetitive rhythmic work between a parent and child can help strengthen the connection between them and supports the child's attachment skills. A few years ago our post permanency workers attended a training on using drums in this manner, but now one of our drums was out of action.

JoAnn researched our options regarding repairing the drum and was delighted when she found Sayon Camara Drumming in Woodstock, Vermont. It took some time to figure out the details but thanks to Sayon's patience and expert repair the drum is now back and once again supporting the important work of strengthening connections between children and their family.

And Sayon Camara Drumming expresses the value of this work so well and they offer drumming classes as well as performances right here in Vermont:

Everyone knows the positive therapeutic effects of drumming in a group on the human body and brain... reducing tension and trauma, boosting the immune system, creating connection, and releasing negative feelings, to name just a few!

Couple that with Sayon – a gentle, clear, undeniably joyful teacher with unconditional respect for others. He offers the ancient, traditional drumming music of his native village in Guinea as a way to access the drum. Living in Vermont, he is available to guide classes and workshops for all ages in all walks of life and at all skill levels, in schools and universities as well as for private groups and organizations, locally or anywhere in the world. Want to know more about Sayon? <https://sayoncamaradrumming.com/>



Celebrate National Adoption Month by taking or scheduling an adoption training!

Vermont's Angel in Adoption—Christina Shuma

On November 14th, in Washington D.C., Christina Shuma was celebrated as a 2019 Angels in Adoption honoree for her outstanding work in the field of adoption. The Angels in Adoption® Program is the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute's (CCAI) signature public awareness event and provides an annual opportunity for all members of the U.S. Congress to honor the good work of their constituents who have enriched the lives of children in the United States and abroad.

“The Angels in Adoption program gives a platform to the families, advocates, and experts who so often serve quietly and faithfully behind the scenes yet make a huge impact on behalf of children in need of families. Together with the Adoption Caucus, we are thrilled to shine a light on the extraordinary work of our Angels and the power of adoption,” said CCAI’s Interim Executive Director, Bethany Haley.



Christina began her career in Vermont at Lund as a Permanency Planning Counselor in 2000. After several years she changed her focus to providing Post Permanency support and service to families joined together by Adoption or Guardianship and coordinating the Post-Permanency program at Lund for many years. Gradually, she grew to take on the coordination of the Vermont Adoption Registry and Search and Reunion work at Lund. Over the last three years, Christina has been in the role of the QIC-AG Vermont Site Implementation Manager in addition to the Vermont Adoption Registry facilitation. More recently, Christina took on the job of Post-Adoption Contact Agreement worker for the State of Vermont.

Christina’s supervisor Wanda Audette wrote, “Christina has been a pioneer in the work and development of the Post Permanency Program at

Lund. Christina carries a high level of historical knowledge around her work for the Vermont Adoption Registry and Lund’s Search and Reunion Program. She has a thorough knowledge of the laws governing the Registry, and works hard to provide requestors all the information that is legally allowed. She goes above and beyond when working to deliver materials to a birth parent who has not provided a current address; she understands the importance of communication between birth and adoptive families and deals with everyone respectfully and supportively. Her critical thinking and thoroughness ensures that the QIC-AG products are of the highest quality and useful to families and service providers. Christina is a gem! Thank you Christina for your 19 years of growth and exceptional work at Lund and in the field of Adoption.”



Celebrate National Adoption Month by taking or scheduling an adoption training!

VERMONT CONSORTIUM LIBRARY

for ADOPTION & GUARDIANSHIP

The Vermont Consortium maintains an extensive library focused on providing resources for families who adopt or provide guardianship, and their children.

Topics include:

- private adoption,
- adopting through child welfare,
- kinship,
- talking with your children about adoption,
- transracial/transcultural adoptions,
- developmental trauma,
- resilience.....
- and then there are picture books for children as well as books for youth!



The library is available to Vermont parents, children, youth, and the professionals who serve them. The library is physically located in the Vermont easterseals office, 641 Comstock Road, Berlin, VT—please call before stopping by: 802-223-4744. The library is also accessible on line at <https://vac.myturn.com> - open up your account, reserve the books you are interested in, and they will be sent to your home with a self addressed stamped envelope for you to return them to the library when they are due back.

Don't miss out on this great support!

BLACK IS MY BODY BY EMILY BERNARD

Stories from My Grandmother's Time, My Mother's and Mine

Reviewed by Ann Clark, LICSW, Adoption Advocates

What a pleasure it is to review a book by a Vermonter and a parent by adoption. Dr. Emily Bernard is a black woman who is an English professor at the University of Vermont. She is known for her classes on racism on campus. She and her husband John, who is Caucasian, are the proud parents of twin daughters adopted from Ethiopia as toddlers.

BLACK IS THE BODY

STORIES FROM MY GRANDMOTHER'S TIME, MY MOTHER'S TIME, AND MINE

EMILY BERNARD

Black is my Body is a compelling collections of essays which Emily has written over the years. The book has been highly recognized nationally. It is aptly described by Oprah Magazine as one of the Most Anticipated Books of 2019, and the Library Journal stated “Bernard’s honesty and vulnerability reveal a strong voice with no sugar-coating, sharing her struggle, ambivalence, hopes and fears as an individual within a web of relationships, black and white. Highly recommended.”

Emily talks poignantly in the book about the racism her grandmother and parents experienced and remembers vividly her father telling her that “White boys only want one thing from black girls.” He did not explain and Emily states that she knew immediately what he meant, and understood that he was only trying to (continued on next page)

Celebrate National Adoption Month by taking or scheduling an adoption training!

BLACK IS MY BODY BY EMILY BERNARD—Book Review—*Continued*



(continued from previous page) protect her from a history of exploitation of black female bodies.

Emily states that she enjoys being black but it took her a long time to get there, to a place of “racial pleasure.” She states “my earliest experiences of blackness were defined by an unpleasant and uncomfortable hypervigilance. Being black meant that you had to be constantly aware, that you could never really be at ease. I got wise to the fact that being black in a white place meant that the world was not a safe place for you.”

Emily takes her daughters regularly on “pilgrimages” to Brooklyn where her brother lives, to New York City, and to her parents’ home in Nashville to enjoy the diversity that Vermont does not offer. She adds that to her daughters, unlike herself, being black in a white place is the only world they know.

This book is must read for those of us parenting black children in a white world or those of us in the field of adoption, foster care and kinship placing black children with white families. The book is readily available in local libraries (including the Consortium’s) and book stores.

I AM....., exploring what it means to be a Vermont Artist

November 8-December 20, 2019, Spotlight Gallery, 136 State Street, Montpelier

Sponsored by the Vermont Arts Council

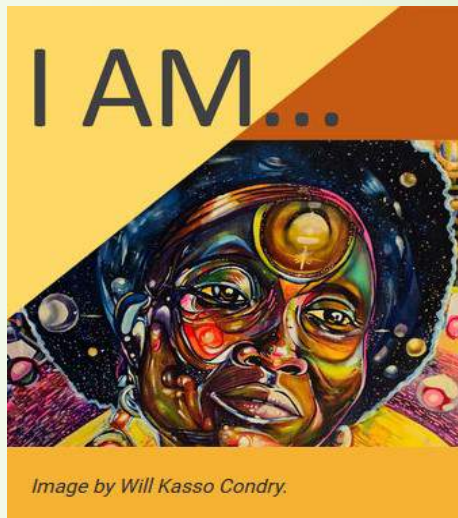


Image by Will Kasso Condry.

Works created by twenty-seven artists reveal a deep connection to the earth, the landscape, and the history of Vermont. This exhibit encompasses a range of media and illustrates how these Vermont artists have chosen to embed their cultural lineage and heritage, to bear witness to the current political atmosphere, to express trauma, to discover one’s self.

Transracial/transcultural families know the importance of exposing their children to a diverse world where their child’s race and/or ethnicity is represented.

In this exhibit families will find various forms of art that have been created by a diverse group of Vermont artists. Deidra Razzaque, one of the Consortium’s trainers, grew up in a transracial/transcultural kinship family and her work is among that displayed in this exhibit. To get more information both on the exhibit and the artists go to <https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/blog/i-am-speaks-for-itself/>



Deidra Razzaque

Celebrate National Adoption Month by taking or scheduling an adoption training!

VERMONT SUPPORT GROUPS FOR FAMILIES

*"The support group was my **LIFELINE** especially in the early years. My grandson and I were adjusting to a different life. I truly would never have been able to survive had it not been for the people in the support group."*



The following Support Groups are provided by the Vermont Adoption Consortium in collaboration with Post permanence Services (From Lund, Easterseals, or NFI). Some groups are also co-sponsored by community partners or are community based support groups.

Addison County

Support Group for Adoptive and Guardianship Families held the 4th Tuesday of the month. 5:30-7:00 pm. Please contact Donna Provin for more information and for the location at (802) 343-0565 or email donnap@lundvt.org

Bellows Falls

Circle of Support for Adoptive and Guardianship Families meets the second Wednesday of each month from 6 to 8 pm at the Health Center at Bellows Falls, 1 Hospital Court. Please call Stephanie Amyot for more information (802) 735-5031

Bennington County

3rd Thursday of the month from 7 - 9 pm at the Shaftsbury Methodist Church. For more information contact: Jill C. Bouton at (413) 884-5589

Brattleboro

Support Group for Adoptive and Guardianship Parents the second Monday of the month, 6:30-8:30 pm. Please contact Danna Bare, M Ed, for more information and for the current location (802) 258-0308

Chittenden County

Chittenden County Circle of Parents Support Group for Adoptive and Guardianship Families
This group is held the LAST Tuesday of every month from 5:00-6:30pm in South Burlington.
Pre-registration is required. For more information or to RSVP, contact Katherine Boise, BSW, M.Ed at Lund at (802) 864-7467.

Self-Care Support Group for Adoptive and Guardianship Caregivers: This group meets at the 3rd Friday of the month at Lund (S.Burlington) from 12:00-1:15. It focuses on self-care activities and discussions. To get more information or to RSVP, please call Melissa Appleton at 864-7467 or email kathleeny@lundvt.org

Franklin County

1st Thursday of every month at the Senior Center, 75 Messenger Street, or the Church on the Rock, St. Albans from 5:30-7:30 pm. Dinner and childcare provided at no cost. Please contact Nina Hill (802) 495-6187 or Monica Darrah (802) 495-6535 to RSVP or for more information.

Morrisville

Please contact Pam Montgomery, easterseals of Vermont, (802) 595-5046 for information

St Johnsbury

The Northeast Kingdom Foster and Adoptive Community meets the second Thursday of each month from 5:30-7:00 pm at the Union Baptist Church in Waterford. Please contact Barb Hash for more information (802) 473-6108

Upper Valley

Kinship Care Support Group meets the first Thursday of each month, 12:00-1:30 pm, 2458 Christian Street, Wilder, VT (next to Dothan Brook School on Route 5). For more information contact: Judith Bush, ACSW (802) 356-9393 x 2 or jbush@together.net

Transracial support Groups :

Burlington

Transracial Adoptive Families of Vermont meets up in various locations, generally in the Chittenden Country area. Please contact Jordy Baker for more information jordybaker@me.com

Montpelier

Families of Color, open to all families. Play, eat and discuss issues of adoption, race and multiculturalism. Bring snacks and games to share, and dress for the weather. Third Sundays, 3-5 p.m. Unitarian Church, 130 Main Street, Montpelier.

Alyson, 439-6096 or alyson.mahony@gmail.com

Celebrate National Adoption Month by taking or scheduling an adoption training!

POST PERMANENCY SERVICES FOR FAMILIES



Families formed by adoption or guardianship may need support and those needs usually change over time as children and families grow and change. Post Permanency Services address the normal issues adoptive and guardianship families face as well as more significant issues that can arise when raising a child who has experienced a traumatic start in life.

Supports offered include:

- ◆ In-home adjusted parent education, identifying strengths and challenges and developing plans that foster growth
- ◆ Consultation to treatment teams and advocacy, providing education supports within schools and collaborating with treatment teams
- ◆ Referrals to community resources
- ◆ General adoption/guardianship information
- ◆ inship placement support



These services are provided by a Post Permanency Service Provider meeting with the family and working with them to assess and determine what services are needed. Together a plan will be made and goals set for these services. To support the family in meeting their goals the Post Permanency provider will be meeting with the family monthly in their home as well as attending any meetings that the family identifies—such as treatment team meetings and school meetings.



*“I would like to **thank** the Post Permanency Services staff they have been wonderful people to work with who are a wealth of knowledge and support. Whether just listening to me vent and bounce ideas off of, or to giving me advice on how to deal with difficult birth family members, or how to deal with school staff. They have given us awesome contacts to help with these struggles. Thank you all for that you do. I wouldn't know where I'd be today without you.”*

Post Permanency Services are available to families formed by adoptive and guardianship . For information regarding services in your area please contact:

**BARRE, BENNINGTON, HARTFORD,
MORRISVILLE, ST. JOHNSBURY &
RUTLAND AHS Districts**

EASTERSEALS

14 North Main Street, Ste 3004, Barre. VT 05641
Lynn Bessette, Program Manager (802) 279-
4241 lbessette@eastersealsvt.org

**BRATTLEBORO, BURLINGTON, MIDDLEBURY,
NEWPORT & SPRINGFIELD AHS Districts**

LUND

P.O. Box 4009, Burlington, VT 05401
Melissa Appleton, Supervisor (802) 864-7467 X2019 C:
782-3311 melissaa@lundvt.org

ST ALBANS AHS District

NFI, Northeast Family Institute

12 Fairfield Hill Road, St. Albans, VT 05478
Kriss Lococo, Regional Manager, (802) 524-1700
Kristenlococo@nafi.com

Celebrate National Adoption Month by taking or scheduling an adoption training!