

# Celebration of Created Families

## *Work Shop Schedule*

9:30 – 10:00am

### *Registration*

10:00 – 10:30 am

### *Hear the Stories*

*Being adopted is an amazing journey. Adopting a child is life-changing. Come hear the stories of those whose lives have been forever impacted through adoption.*

10:40 – 11:30am

### *Is Fostering for You?*

No matter how old, every child desires a permanent family of their own.

Hear from the experts in the field about the challenges and rewards of being a foster parent.

### *Domestic Adoption*

Experts in the field of domestic adoption present all the information you need to know about the adoption process in Oklahoma.

### *International Adoption*

Experts in the field of international adoption share all you need to know about making a difference in the life of an orphan.

### ***Grief & Loss in the Triad***

It's hard to believe that adoption includes both joy and grief. Explore how grief is triggered and processed by all members in the adoption triad.

### ***Ages & Stages of Adoption***

When and how do you talk to your child about being adopted?

What do children and teens think about being adopted?

Learn how you can help your adopted child come to terms with the question "Where did I come from?"

### ***Meet the Parents***

Adopting a child is the first step in a lifetime together! Come hear parents share their experience about life after adoption.

### ***Mentoring Makes a Difference***

Investing in the life of a child or teen is never a waste of time!

Come hear all the ways you can transform someone's life.

**11:40 – 12:30pm**

### ***Creative Ways to Finance Your Adoption***

Have you thought about adopting a child but the price tag seems out of reach? This session will inform you of creative ways to finance an adoption. Also, a detailed description of the federal tax credit given to adoptive families will be provided.

### ***Openness in Adoption***

You've heard about open adoption.

You have lots of concerns about this type of ongoing relationship. Come hear an adoption expert, a birth mother and an adoptive mother share their expertise and experience on open adoption.

### ***Transracial Adoption***

Hear first-hand from a foster mom whose experienced transracial adoption. Find out how you can support a healthy exploration of your children's culture without constantly reminding them that they are different.

### ***Profile Books: Your Life in Pictures***

Creating a profile book is sometimes the most challenging part of domestic adoption.

Learn numerous tips on designing a book that best showcases you!

### ***Ages & Stages of Adoption***

Ever wonder how to bring up the topic of adoption to your child? When should you start talking to your child about adoption? How do you and other family members discuss adoption with others? Answers to these questions and more including a discussion of the W.I.S.E. Up program.

### ***Home Study101***

Whether you decide to create your family through public, domestic or international adoption, a home study is mandatory.

Learn what to expect in this assessment process

### ***Mentoring Makes a Difference***

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**12:30 – 1:15pm**

### ***Lunch***

### ***A Birth Mother's Perspective on Adoption***

As a birthmother, Crystal Drwenski knows first hand the tough choices and pressures young women face when considering their options for an unplanned pregnancy. Crystal placed her daughter Laura seven and a half years ago with a loving family, and now enjoys an open adoption.

The choice for adoption proved to be a pivotal event in Crystal's life that God used to lead her away from a life of abuse, drugs and alcohol. Since her daughter was born, she has gone on to graduate college, start a business, lead an abortion alternative ministry and advocate for pro-adoption, pro-life legislation in Oklahoma.

1:20 – 2:20pm

### ***Is Fostering for You?***

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### ***Meet the Parents***

Adopting a child is the first step in a lifetime together! Come hear parents share their experience about life after adoption

### ***Legal Issues in Adoption***

A legal expert in the field of domestic and international adoption describes the legal processes involved in adoption.

## ***Home Study101***

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**2:30 – 3:30pm**

## ***Informational Fair***

Agency representatives from the State of Oklahoma will be at their booths to answer questions and share valuable information with you!

## ***About the Speakers***

### **Openness in Adoption**

*Cheryl Bauman, Crisis Pregnancy Outreach*

### **Domestic Adoption**

*Devonne Carter, LCSW, Christian Services of Oklahoma*

Devonne Carter is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker is the Director for Christian Services of Oklahoma. Prior to joining this non-profit agency, she served as a case worker for Colorado Christian Services from 1990–2000. Devonne is married to Jerry and they have three children, Jarrett, age 9, Jadyn, age 7, and Jansen age 2. Devonne has a special love for adoption, as one of her first cousins was placed for adoption and another first cousin joined their family through adoption.

### **A Birth Mother's Perspective on Adoption**

*Crystal Drwenski*

Crystal placed her daughter Laura seven and a half years ago with a loving family, and now enjoys an open adoption. She regularly speaks on women's and adoption issues. She is passionate about Christ-centered, ethical adoption being an event that not only creates families but positively impacts the lives of birthparents who make adoption possible.

## **International Adoption**

*Amber Lewis, LPC, American World Adoption Agency*

Amber Lewis is a Licensed Professional Counselor and an adoptive mom to a Chinese daughter. She provides educational, home study, and post-placement services for Oklahoma families who are using America-World Adoption Association to facilitate their international adoption.

## **Legal Issues in Adoption**

*Khristan Strubhar, Attorney*

Khristan K. Strubhar earned her Juris Doctor degree from the University of Oklahoma, College of Law, graduating with the highest honors. Khristan currently practices in the areas of adoption and family law in Yukon, Oklahoma. She is a member of the Canadian County and Oklahoma Bar Associations. In 2007, Ms. Strubhar served as the Canadian County Bar Association president. She is also a member of the Oklahoma Bar Association Women in Law Committee. She and her husband are proud parents of two daughters who were born in China.

## **Home Study 101**

*Michael Nomura, LCSW, Heritage Family Services*

Mike Nomura is the co-director of Heritage Family Services. He and his wife, Debbie, founded this Christian, non-profit social service agency in 1996 to provide a full range of adoption and other family services throughout Oklahoma. Since 1998, Heritage has administered the Interstate Compact for the Placement of children (ICPC) for our state.

## **Creative Ways to Finance Your Adoption**

*Sheri Gilleland Adoptive Parent*

Sheri is a registered nurse and lives with her husband of 12 years and her two daughters. Katilyn, age 5, is their biological daughter, and Kendal, age 3, is their Chinese daughter by adoption. Although not a financial expert, she provides an insiders view of creative ways to finance adoption!

## **Is Fostering for You?**

*Rebecca Boston, Oklahoma Department of Human Services*

Rebecca and her husband of 21 years have two daughters, age 15 and 10. They served from 1990–2002 as music missionaries in Chile, South America. Rebecca returned to college late in life, graduating with a Bachelor's of Science degree in Organizational Leadership in December 2006. Since September 2007, she has worked for the Oklahoma Department of Human Services as a Foster Care Recruiter.

## **Profile Books: Your Life in Pictures**

*Kim Kimmel & Amelia Sloas, Adoptive Parents*

Kim Kimmel is the mother of a 6-year-old girl whom she adopted from Catholic Charities. She and her husband have been married for 18 years. They have worked as Police Officers for Oklahoma City for 17 years. Kim's hobbies include traveling, scrap booking, and photography.

Amelia Sloas is the mother of a 6-year-old son she adopted from Catholic Charities. Amelia is a schoolteacher in the Geronimo, OK school system. Scrap booking is also one of her hobbies

## **Mentoring Makes a Difference**

*Rick & Gwen, Royal Family Kids Camp*

## **Transracial Adoption**

*Ray Merchant, Adoptive Parent*

Ray Merchant and her husband are the parents of 11 children, 8 of these children are adopted. She and her husband are Caucasian but all of the children they adopted are of another race besides Caucasian. Their oldest son they adopted is 24-years-old so Ray is very experienced in dealing with the complexities of a multiracial family.

## **Ages & Stages of Adoption**

*Kimberly Peck, LCSW, Dillon International*

Kimberly L. Peck, M.S.W., L.C.S.W., is an adoption social worker in the Oklahoma City, Oklahoma metro area. She is an adult adoptee and also an adoptive parent to two children through International Adoption. Kimberly is native to Texas but was raised in Oklahoma. She graduated from both Oklahoma State University and The University of Oklahoma.

## **Grief & Loss in the Triad**

*Dierdre L. McCool, LPC, Deaconess Pregnancy & Adoption Services*

Dierdre McCool is the Executive Director of Deaconess Pregnancy & Adoption Services. She has been involved in the field of adoption for over 12 years, working extensively with all members of the adoption triad. Mrs. McCool is currently serving as President of the Oklahoma Adoption Coalition and was also named as a 2007 *Angel in Adoption*.