



CONCERNED PERSONS FOR ADOPTION (CPFA)

11th ANNUAL FAMILY CONFERENCE

First Presbyterian Church of Whippany

494 Route 10 West, Whippany, NJ 07981

Saturday, October 18, 2025

9:00 am – 2:00 pm

To register please visit

<https://fs17.formsite.com/cpfanj/Family/index>

WORKSHOPS FOR ADULTS

“Can We Talk?” Parents-Only Open Discussion

Feeling overwhelmed by parenting? Are you facing challenging behavior from your child? Don't know where to turn? How to deal with the problems? Embarrassed to mention anything to your social worker? Come listen, ask, and share your thoughts, concerns and more with experienced adoptive parents during this “for parents only- no professionals invited” chat. Facilitated by Dr. Jane Aronson, Child Psychologist and Pediatrician.

Creativity, Courage, and Curiosity Through Art Therapy

Art Psychotherapy stands out as a unique mental health specialization that harnesses the power of artistic creation and expression for psychological growth and healing. Tracey Saia is an energetic and compassionate Board Certified, Licensed Professional Art Therapist, who has been pioneering in the mental health and art therapy landscape for over 25 years. With a talent for understanding trauma, she has guided her clients through some of life's most daunting challenges, employing a trauma-informed approach that seamlessly integrates art with traditional therapeutic practices.

Empathy and Empowerment: Raising Adopted Children Through a Trauma-Informed Lens

This workshop offers practical strategies to strengthen connections with all youth, including adopted children. Through hands-on exercises and discussion, parents will learn how to validate their child's experiences while fostering confidence and empowerment. This workshop will be facilitated by the Children (and Families) Healing After Trauma (CHAT) Clinic professionals from the Rutgers University Center for Psychological Services.

Peaceful Kids, Empowered Parents: Tools to Support Your Child's Emotional Health

In addition to the many joys, adoption can also come with invisible emotional wounds. EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing), a brain-based therapy, can help children process early trauma, attachment disruptions, and loss in a safe, productive way. In this workshop, you will learn about resourcing, an important first phase of the EMDR process. You will leave with some practical tools you can use to help your child build internal feelings of peace, confidence and connection. Workshop presented by Elisa Bruckner, Licensed Clinical Social Worker and EMDR Certified Therapist.

The Adoptive Child's Journey: Questions Along the Way

Join an adoptive parent and adult adoptee from the NJ Adoption Resource Clearing House (NJ ARCH) in discussing various questions that many adoptees and parents may have concerning issues with identity, school, loss and more. This workshop is based on the book "Twenty Things Adopted Kids Wish Their Adoptive Parents Knew" by Sherri Eldridge. Information and resources will be provided. Presented by Cindy Lapidus, Assistant Director, and Nico Dymerski from the NJ Adoption Resource Clearing House (NJ ARCH), a program of Children's Aid and Family Services.

WORKSHOPS FOR ALL YOUTH AGE GROUPS, Ages 8-12 and Ages 13-16

SESSIONS FOR AGES 8-12:

Creature Comfort Pet Therapy

Join Creature Comfort Pets from Morris Plains in learning to interact and communicate safely with their animal(s). This hands-on session will allow attendees to interact with the pups, give them commands, and have cuddle time. The workshop presenter, will discuss the benefits of animals in our lives as well as future opportunities to work with our furry friends.

Interactive Arts and Crafts: Identity Craft "Zine"

In this fun and creative arts and crafts session led by art teacher, Ms. Lauren Webster, children will explore self-expression by creating a "Zine" identity book. During this session, kids will be shown how to make a "Zine" magazine with pictures, images and art tools which is a wonderful way for kids to explore their interests, goals, identity and more. Other crafts will also be offered and all supplies are provided.

The Superpower of Your Brain: Big Feelings Tools for Kids

Do you ever have big feelings or worries? Get angry quickly and then feel bad afterwards? Is it hard for you to calm down or stop your brain from overthinking? In this playful, interactive workshop, we will explore how to use some eye movement tools to help you feel more in control, peaceful and happier inside your body. Imagine being able to feel less frustrated in some of the most overwhelming situations you face both at home and school. Workshop presented by Elisa Bruckner, Licensed Clinical Social Worker and EMDR(Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing), Certified Therapist.

SESSIONS FOR AGES 13-16:

Adoptee to Adoptee, Let's Talk!

This session will be an informal, open, candid conversation on thoughts, personal experiences and more and will be facilitated by two adult adoptees.

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Let's Learn Some Karate! For Kids and Teens

Kids will learn some introductory karate moves, stretching, and warm up exercises and learn benefits of karate, especially focusing on the benefits to youth. Owner and head instructor of Family Martial Arts Center of Scotch Plains and Fanwood NJ, Adam Sackett's fun, positive, engaging class welcomes all to try. In addition to Karate, Adam teaches Kinderdojo and Inclusive Dojo as well as off site classes to many school programs, preschools, and special needs organizations.

Owning Our Stories: Using Relationships as Anchors

This teen workshop looks at what it means to feel a loss you can't always see, the challenges that can come with it, and ways to use your relationships to feel supported and connected. This discussion will be led and facilitated by the Children (and Families) Healing After Trauma (CHAT) Clinic professionals from the Rutgers University Center for Psychological Services.

The Adoptee's Journey: My Questions, My Voice

Ever wish people really understood what adoption feels like for you? This is your space to talk about it. You can write down your thoughts anonymously or share them out loud—it's up to you. We'll explore the questions, ideas, and stories that matter most to adoptees like you in a safe and respectful conversation. This workshop will be facilitated by Cindy Lapidus and Nico Dymerski from the NJ Adoption Resource Clearing House (NJ ARCH), a program of Children's Aid and Family Services.