



CONCERNED PERSONS FOR ADOPTION (CPFA)

10th ANNUAL FAMILY CONFERENCE

First Presbyterian Church of Whippany

494 Route 10 West, Whippany, NJ 07981

Saturday, October 19, 2024

9:00 am – 2:00 pm

To register please visit

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

WORKSHOPS FOR ADULTS

Adoption 101

This session will give honest and reassuring advice about selecting the best path to adoption, choosing an adoption agency, the Home Study process and possible communication with birth parents before, during, and after placement. Included will be an overview of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) process, placement supervision, and positive adoption language. Presented by Christine Letizia, Co-Founder and Executive Director of A Loving Choice Adoption Associates.

“Can We Talk?”: Adults Only 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 friends or family? Come listen, ask, and share your thoughts, concerns and more with experienced adoptive parents. This discussion will be led and facilitated by Dr. Jane Aronson, a renowned adoption-focused pediatrician, child and adolescent psychiatrist and adoptive parent.

Pet Time with Mike Kroeber, Bailey, and Charlie

Join Mike Kroeber in learning to interact and communicate safely with his Australian Labradoodles, Bailey and Charlie. This hands-on session will allow attendees to interact with the pups, give them commands, and have cuddle time. Workshop presenter, Mike Kroeber, will discuss the benefits of animals in our lives as well as future opportunities to work with our furry friends.

Safe but Not Scared: Digital Parenting Decoded

Join Psychologist, Dr. Catherine Bianchi, for a session designed to empower adoptive and foster parents in navigating the complex world of social media with their children and teens. Parents will learn practical strategies to help their children engage with social media safely while addressing the particular emotional and psychological needs of adopted and foster children. The goal is to equip parents with tools to foster healthy online experiences without fostering fear.

Staying the Course: The Importance of Emotional Regulation for Adoptive and Foster Families

Sharon Sorrentino-O'Keefe, Ph.D., and John O'Keefe will provide information on the importance of emotional regulation for all members of the adoptive or foster family; this includes the causes of

dysregulation and a variety of tools and strategies for fostering emotional regulation and building tools for self-regulation.

When Adoptees Grow Up: Search and Reunion (Adoptive Parent or Adult Adoptee)

Adult adoptees are often faced with unique challenges. Among them are those related to identity, relationships, loss, belonging, parenting, lack of medical history, and search and reunion. This workshop will focus on search and reunion, an undertaking which many adult adoptees at least consider at some point in their lives. Search and reunion are different phenomenon, each of which is associated with complex social and emotional considerations, which will be explored and discussed. Facilitated by Amy Geller, DSW, LCSW & Amy Strickler, MSW, LSW. (Both are adoptees, social workers, and researchers. Amy Strickler is also an adoptive parent.)

Who Am I? The Complexity of Pre-Teen/Teen Identity and Adoption

Adolescence is a tough time for almost all teenagers. The changes during this time are extensive and include physical, emotional, psychological, behavioral, social, and sexual differences. Do adopted pre-teens and teens face different challenges than their non-adopted peers? The presenter will explore techniques and strategies with parents to support their teen as they ask, "Who am I?" and "Where do I belong?" This session will also touch on transracial identity. Presented by E. Stefani Moon, LPC, NJ ARCH, a Program of Children's Aid and Family Services. Stefani is also an adoptive parent of two transracially-adopted girls, ages 10 and 14.

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

Pet Time with Mike Kroeber, Bailey, and Charlie

Join Mike Kroeber in learning to interact and communicate safely with his Australian Labradoodles, Bailey and Charlie. This hands-on session will allow attendees to interact with the pups, give them commands, and have cuddle time. Workshop presenter, Mike Kroeber, will discuss the benefits of animals in our lives as well as future opportunities to work with our furry friends.

Yoga for Kids and Teens

Join Ms. Michelle Scheps, Trained Yoga Alliance Instructor, for an all-level, friendly practice. Utilizing breathwork, movement and calming techniques, participants will gain self-awareness and relaxation during this gentle practice.

WORKSHOPS EXCLUSIVELY FOR AGES 8-12

Sharing Our Own Stories - Children's Books by a Dad & Daughter

Meet a special Dad & Daughter duo - Tom Tracy and the real life "Scoochie" from the Scoochie & Skiddles Inclusive Kids' Books. These local authors showcase diverse families, including adoptive and foster families, in their award-winning children's books. In this session, the authors will share how their family's personal adoption journey was the basis for a collaborative children's book. After reading the book aloud, participants will be invited to share their own family formation stories as part of a group discussion focused on celebrating every family's unique journey. In addition to being an author, Tom is a NJ licensed clinical social worker who has dedicated his career to helping families and their children for over 25 years. "Scoochie" is a second grader who, among other things, aspires to author and illustrate her own children's book one day. All children participating in this session will receive a copy of the book signed by Tom and his daughter.

Interactive Arts and Crafts: Create Your Own Identity Tree and Dreamcatcher

In this fun and creative arts and crafts session led by art teacher, Ms. Lauren Webster, children will explore self-expression by creating "identity trees," where they design trees that reflect their personal qualities and interests using mixed-media materials. Ms. Webster will also guide the children in creating individualized dreamcatchers, decorating them with beads, feathers, and other embellishments, learning about the cultural significance and artistic techniques behind these traditional artifacts. All supplies are provided.

WORKSHOPS EXCLUSIVELY FOR AGES 13-16

When Adoptees Grow Up: A Conversation with Two Adult Adoptees

This session will explore adoption-specific topics pre-teens, teens, and young adults may wonder about or experience as they get older. This will be an "adoptees only," open, relaxed space for sharing lived experience while learning from fellow adoptees. Facilitated by Amy Geller, DSW, LCSW & Amy Strickler, MSW, LSW. (Both are adoptees, social workers, and researchers. Amy Strickler is also an adoptive parent.)

***Who Am I?* Teen Identity and Adoption: A Conversation**

This session will explore identity and other topics pre-teens and teens may have on their minds that their non-adopted friends may not experience. This session is an open space for sharing thoughts and ideas while learning from peers. Facilitated by E. Stefani Moon, LPC, NJ Adoption Resource Clearing House (NJ ARCH). Stefani is also an adoptive parent of two transracially-adopted girls, ages 10 and 14.