



REACH
Rural Expansion of Adoptive
Communities and Homes
A PATH, INC. INITIATIVE

AMBASSADOR CONNECTION

Finding Forever Families

June 2006

HELLO ADOPTION AMBASSADORS

School is out for the summer! The school-year routine we have worked so hard to get smoothed out and comfortable for our children and us is gone. Summer school, baby sitters, community events, sleepovers and vacations for those of us who can find the time will take the place of our daily routine. We can all handle it! It's part of why we adopted in the first place: its our mission to be planners, drivers, coaches and what ever else we are asked to be.

But sometimes, we need help and encouragement, and that is why we have support groups. It's sometimes good to know that no matter how challenging your day was, someone else had a day that wasn't as good as yours. Through support groups we look for help or just a "normal" conversation to share. Many times as we are looking for help we become the help, an outlet for others who need it. That is why support groups are so important. We can talk to parents like us about children like ours. If you don't have a support group and can't find one in your area let me know, and together we can make it happen.

You can always contact me at any time for any adoption-related concern: Toll free at 1-866-797-3224; cell 1-507-382-7619; or email tlorentz@pathinc.org.



NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

Although November seems a long way off, we are already starting to prepare for a "Media Blitz". We will be actively seeking opportunities to place adoption stories in the news. We need to update our list of adoption ambassadors who are willing to share their stories with the newspapers, radio and television outlets in their areas. By starting the process of media outreach earlier, we hope to increase the number of opportunities and avoid the challenges of scheduling conflicts. Please let Tim Lorentz know if you would be willing to share your story with the media during National Adoption Month.

WELCOME TO THE REACH TEAM!

JOANNE FIELDING, INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT SPECIALIST

Joanne Fielding recently joined the REACH Project as Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) specialist. Joanne will help REACH with recruitment, education and support to increase the number of Native adoptive and foster families in Minnesota. Her goal is to help raise awareness of the need for more Native families to provide homes for the Native children waiting in foster care.

With 15 years of social work experience, Joanne brings a background in child welfare to her REACH position. She has a bachelor's degree in social work from the University of Manitoba and is currently working on her master's degree at the University of Minnesota.

A member of the Ojibwe nation, Joanne is originally from the Sagkeeng First Nation community in Manitoba, Canada. She lives in Bemidji with her husband, a member of North Dakota's Turtle Mountain community, and daughter.



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ADOPTION AMBASSADOR MONTHLY ONLINE CHAT SESSIONS

Thursday, June 29 from 6-7 p.m., REACH Project Coordinator Tim Lorentz will host a live online chat session for Ambassadors. Please join him to:

- Learn more about the REACH Project and your role as an Adoption Ambassador
- Share your ideas and experiences
- Discuss how to reach out to your community to raise awareness of the need for more foster and adoptive families

To join the chat, go to www.fosterparentnet.org/chat/ and scroll down to enter a user name. Click "Go" to enter the chat room. Contact JoAnn Crane at 651-642-5383 or jcrane@pathinc.org with questions.

ADOPTION AMBASSADORS NEEDED

With summer comes the season of county fairs. A booth at a county fair is a great way to increase public awareness of the need for more foster and adoptive families. Because prospective families appreciate hearing from someone who has fostered or adopted, we are seeking ambassadors to help staff a booth at several county fairs. We will have a REACH/PATH booth at the Olmstead County Fair and Mower County Fair in Minnesota. We are waiting for confirmation from the Northern Wisconsin State Fair and the Central Wisconsin State Fair. If you are already participating in a fair booth and would like to include REACH or PATH brochures, just let us know. We are happy to send materials your way!

FEATURED AMBASSADOR

Hello. My name is Ginger Brusewitz and I live in Northern Minnesota. We live on the Pine Lake road close to Gonvick, Minnesota. I am a single mother and currently have 10 children living with me. I have 12 kids altogether; one birth child, seven adopted and four foster children. I have been a foster parent for over 21 years and have built a permanent family through the foster care system. For the last eight



years, I've been a professional foster parent specializing in cerebral palsy and sexually abused girls. I work primarily with Red Lake Family Services and enjoy the privilege of learning a new culture and helping children in need. Foster care is my lifetime commitment and adoption is icing on the cake. To take children into my heart that have known more heartache than they should have and watch them slowly but steadily come out of hiding is an amazing reward. I cannot imagine doing anything else with my life. I bless God every day for the many blessings he has brought into my home and my heart.

Thank you Ginger for all your hard work!

OUTREACH TOOLKITS

The OutREACH Toolkits have arrived! A sample of recruitment resources in a handy tote bag is now available to all Adoption Ambassadors. Resources include not only speaking tips and a PowerPoint presentation, but also flyers, table-tents, magnets, faith-based materials, newsletter templates and even radio public service announcements. A CD-Rom contains digital versions of the materials, which you can then customize to your local area. The Toolkits will be mailed to all active ambassadors as well as to the PATH offices. Tim Lorentz is also available to discuss the Toolkits at share and support group meetings or recruitment coalition meetings. Please contact Tim Lorentz for more information on the OutREACH Toolkits.



For more information on
adopting a child from foster care, call
1-866-79REACH or
log onto www.adoptinfo.org



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