



Adoption Matters

Spring 2007

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Mark your calendar to attend this informative conference held in October.



Three Rivers Adoption Council...because every child needs a family

Three Rivers Arts Festival

Friday, June 1 - Sunday, June 17 Downtown Pittsburgh

This huge festival of the visual and performing arts takes over Point State Park and other downtown locations during the first 2 1/2 weeks of June.

View exhibits, enjoy concerts, shop, participate in workshops and more!

Point State Park and other downtown venues

Big Butler Fair

Friday, June 29 - Saturday, July 7 Prospect, PA - Butler County

The largest fair in Western Pennsylvania has also been operating for over 150 years. Enjoy nine big days of food, animals, concerts, and fun. Feature events for 2007 include Bike Night, CDL Trucker's Day, Demolition Derbys, Amateur Boxing, Figure 8 Races, 4th of July Fireworks, Truck Pulls, the Colgate Country Concert and the Y108 Freedom Fest Concert.

Admission \$5 before 4pm, \$7 after 4pm - these prices do not include rides! . All day Ride Band tickets are \$10 before 4pm and \$12 after 4pm. Amateur boxing (\$5) and the Y108 Freedom Fest (\$12) are not included in admission prices.

Cinema In The Park

Every summer, CitiParks, the City Of Pittsburgh Parks Department, programs free movies in parks throughout Pittsburgh. The films generally start around dusk.

Admission is free, but inclement weather may cause a cancellation. Presented by CitiParks, the parks and recreation department of the City of Pittsburgh. For more information, call (412) 937-3039.

Wings Over Pittsburgh Airshow

June 16-17 - Pittsburgh International Airport

The public is invited to attend the Wings Over Pittsburgh Air Show from June 16-17, 2007. This huge event is intended to build strong ties with the community by allowing the general public to observe the daily operations of the U.S. Military.

Wings Over Pittsburgh features Static Displays, Tactical Demonstrations, numerous flybys of Military Aircraft, plus ground activities showcasing the Military's day-to-day operations.

Pittsburgh Three Rivers Regatta

July 3-4 Station Square - Downtown Pittsburgh

The largest community event in the four-state region... the Pittsburgh Three Rivers Regatta celebrates 30 years of four-day ... high-quality ... free family entertainment.

This world-class Land... Air... Water Festival is the largest Inland Regatta in the Country. Over 1.5 Million People... Annually... attend this summer celebration of Pittsburgh's Three Rivers.

July 4th Celebrations

July 4 Point State Park - Downtown Pittsburgh

Anywhere you are in Pittsburgh, you'll find birthday parties for the good old U.S.A. local newspapers will carry all the particulars, so you can find anything from huge Fireworks Displays - too 'small-town' Parades and Picnics. Point State Park... located at the tip of Pittsburgh's Golden Triangle ... is the site of Pittsburgh's daylong Independence Day Celebration. Musical Acts & Entertainment start in the afternoon, and end with a 21-Gun Salute followed by a really big Fireworks Display at 9:40 PM. 1000's of People turn out but, you can also view the fireworks from a variety of 'less crowded' locations nearby. Fourth of July at Point State Park activities begin at 1 PM.

Stephen Foster Music & Heritage Festival - Doo Dah Days

Saturday, July 12 - 5pm Lawrenceville, PA -- FREE

It's a party and everyone's invited! Be part of the festivities as the Lawrenceville Historical Society (LHS) and the Allegheny Cemetery Historical Association (ACHA) celebrate Stephen Foster's birthday at the second annual "Doo Dah Days, Stephen Foster Music and Heritage Festival", Allegheny Cemetery, Lawrenceville. Doo Dah Days will be bustling with great bands playing folk (era) music, costumed re-enactors, outdoor pursuits, food vendors, children's crafts and activities, and educational tours of Allegheny Cemetery - including Foster's burial site. Admission is free, so come commemorate Foster, his music and Pittsburgh's rich history. For more info visit www.doodahdays.com

Isaly's Children's Performance Series

Through December 31, 2007

Enjoy a fantastic lineup of children's performers at the Museum, from puppeteers to musical acts, cartoonists to artists and actors. Hands-on creative activities are included with many performances.

Weekly features include a musical Stuffedie show with Professor Mi-Gooch every Friday at noon. Check the Calendar of Events for daily performances in bright blue.

All performances and activities in the series are free with Museum admission.

Time for Reform: Aging Out and On Their Own

An excerpt from the report by the

The Pew Charitable Trusts' Kids Are Waiting campaign and The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative.

To view the complete report visit <http://kidsarewaiting.org/reports/files/AgingOut.pdf>

While the total number of children in foster care nationally has been decreasing, the number of youth who leave foster care because of their age – a situation referred to as “aging out” – has been increasing. In 2005, more than 24,000 youth left foster care at the age of 18* without a family of their own – a 41 percent increase since 1998. On average, those who age out of foster care will have spent nearly 5 years in the system at the time they “emancipate” (the technical term) without ever having been placed with a safe, permanent family of their own. In total, more than 165,000 youth aged out of the system between 1998 and 2005.

Many studies have documented that the outlook for foster youth who age out is often grim:

One in four will be incarcerated within the first two years after they leave the system.²

Over one-fifth will become homeless at some time after age 18.³

Approximately 58 percent had a high school degree at age 19, compared to 87 percent of a national comparison group of non-foster youth.⁴

Of youth who aged out of foster care and are over the age of 25, less than 3 percent earned their college degrees⁵, compared with 28 percent of the general population.⁶

Drawing on findings from focus groups conducted with youth who aged out or expect to age out of foster care,** research studies and interviews, this report describes how the current foster care system fails to provide a permanent family for every child and the difficulty children have staying connected to family and friends while in foster care. The report also presents the latest state-by-state data on the number of youth who have aged out of foster care, and, in the words of former and current foster youth, describes the problems young adults have when they have to face the future without a permanent family to support them. The report briefly discusses the history of permanency in child welfare policy and why one never grows too old to want and need a permanent family. The report concludes with recommendations for public policy reforms that could decrease the number of youth who age out of care each year by improving the federal foster care financing system.

As one youth participant from the Colorado focus group said, “It’s not like they [social workers and others in the foster care system] are people purposefully trying to make your life hell. It’s just that nobody’s bothered to change it yet. So there’s people like us, sitting around the table, on tape, telling whoever is listening, change it. Change it!”

IN URGENT NEED OF REFORM: A FOSTER CARE SYSTEM THAT FAILS TO PROVIDE A PERMANENT FAMILY FOR EVERY CHILD

“I don’t think they (people) understand how it feels not being able to say mom and dad...(G)oin through foster care, you don’t get to say that, you know, that often. And if you do trust somebody enough to say that, who knows how long they’ll stick around.”
Former foster youth, Iowa

More than 500,000 children are currently in foster care, waiting for safe permanent families. Some are waiting to be reunified with their families, some are waiting to be adopted, and others are waiting to leave the system to live with relatives or legal guardians. Those who leave care to the stability and permanency of a family will wait on average 2.5 years. Youth who age out of foster care spend twice as long – an average of 5 years – having waited for a family, only to be denied that outcome.

“I was lucky enough to find an adoptive family at my age, so that experience (from foster family to adoptive family) for me was really amazing, especially for the fact that with everything I went through they weren’t clued into it when I moved in, with all my past abuse and everything like that, and my rages and how I acted out, and they still kept me, which is more than any other of the other foster homes ever did.” Former foster youth, Iowa

The average length of stay in foster care for youth aging out varies widely from state to state, with youth in Nebraska staying about 2.5 years and young people in Illinois spending approximately 9 years in care on average⁷ Some children and youth exit and reenter foster care a number of times. Many variables contribute to longer lengths of stay. Longer average stays in foster care in some states may be a result of a state having increased opportunities for permanent families for some of their foster care population – such as placing younger youth in reunited, kin, adoptive, guardianship, or families – and thus have extended foster care benefits to age 19, 20 or 21, which can contribute to a longer average stay, but actually, reflects an improved system to help young people better transition to adulthood. For example, Illinois currently covers young people to age 21.⁸ Appendix C contains state-by-state data on the length of stay in foster care for youth who age out.

Foster care was created to be a necessary and important safety net for abused and neglected children. It was never intended to be a long-term living arrangement. When reunification with birth families is not possible, federal law directs that the system work to find an alternate permanent family for a child, whether through adoption or placement with a legal guardian. When a young person is faced with leaving foster care's safety net without a permanent family, it is because the system has failed a critical part of its responsibilities for that child.

A troubling aspect of today's foster care system is that thousands of youth currently in foster care have been assigned to the goals of "emancipation" or "long-term foster care" – goals that are commonly referred to as "independent living." These so-called "permanency" goals indicate that child welfare officials are no longer pursuing families to care for and support the youth. In FY 2005, close to 32,000 youth had a goal of "emancipation," and more than 27,000 youth had a goal of "long term foster care."⁹ Absent significant changes in how child welfare system serve youth in foster care, these 69,000 youth – and even more young people in the future – are on a path to leave foster care without a permanent family they can count on. As a result, many will attempt to transition from foster care to live independently, but have limited support to do so.

Foster youth are no more ready for "independence" at age 18 than their non-foster care peers. In a 2003 study by the National Opinion Research Center, most Americans stated that they did not consider a person an adult until age 26 or until he/she had finished school, landed a full-time job, and begun to raise a family.¹⁰ Increasingly, there is recognition that youth in their late teens and early twenties are entering "emerging adulthood" but are far from ready to fully assume adult roles.¹¹ In monetary terms alone, parents, on average, spend \$44,500 on their children after they reach the age of 18.¹² Like other youth preparing to launch into adult roles, youth in foster care deserve the long-term benefits of a permanent family – a safe place to come home to, if necessary, but also someone to turn to for guidance on major decisions, for emotional support in times of stress or celebration, or for other needs such as health insurance, co-signing a loan for a car, or a myriad of other typical life tasks. In addition to the physical and financial support, these youth lack the emotional support of having a family—they often have no one to be grandparents to their grandchildren or provide a home to come to for the holidays.

Of course, some youth who age out continue to maintain close bonds with the foster families who had taken them in. One participant described her foster parents' continued support, even after they were no longer receiving financial reimbursement from the foster care system:

"My foster family was still there, even when I lived on my own and the foster care system kicked me out. And, I didn't get adopted by them when I aged out, and I can still call them. I call my foster family mom and dad. I never had nobody like that in my life, so I'm really appreciative of them to stay by my side, even when they're not getting paid. They're just loving me for me." Former foster youth, Iowa

Although many foster parents provide this ongoing emotional support, foster home licensing policies often make it impossible for them to continue to provide a physical home for the young person once they leave care. Also, some committed foster parents may host many children over many years and cannot provide long-term support to all. Additionally, because many youth are served by group homes and other residential placements, when they reach the limit for receiving foster care services (typically age 18), they are not living with any family at all, and regulations often prohibit contact with young people after they leave a group or residential setting.

For youth without any ongoing support, the outcomes are not positive. The Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth and the Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study conducted in-depth interview with youth who had been placed in foster care as a result of abuse and neglect and who subsequently existed foster care to live on their own. Both studies found that these youth often struggle to complete their education, have significant physical and mental health problems but few resources to obtain health care, are unemployed or underemployed and face poverty, experience homelessness, and in some cases come into contact with the criminal justice system.¹³ More detailed information on the findings of these studies can be found in Appendix D.

**In some states, the age limit for foster care services is older than 18, and it can be up to age 21.*

***See Appendix B for focus group methodology*

Are single parents able to adopt? Are same sex couples able to adopt?

These are two questions that I am asked quite frequently and I have chosen to address them both, for they are similar in nature in that they both beg the question of discrimination within the adoption system. The shortest answer for both of the questions is: Yes (except in the states of Florida and Mississippi where the answer to the second question is No, and in state of Utah where the answer to both of the questions are No). We, however, are in Pennsylvania so I will answer in regards to our state laws.

In the case of single parents, any unmarried person may petition the state for a child who has been put up for adoption by the child's biological parent(s) or is in the custody of the state. This is called individual adoption. In cases of same sex couples (being that these particular unions are still not recognized by the state as a "marriage") the couple would pursue what is called a joint adoption. Ideally, a joint adoption is the same process heterosexual couples who are not married would petition for. We could even go so far as to say people who are not married would petition the state for a joint adoption. The Pennsylvania law regarding same sex couples and adoption is really unclear. Even though there are no concrete laws prohibiting the joint adoption of a child by same sex couples we have not yet come so far that these couples won't experience prejudicial road blocks. Some same sex couples choose to go the route of individual adoption wherein one person petitions to adopt. Once that individual adoption is finalized, the other person can petition to adopt the child of his or her partner. This is known as second parent adoption. As long as the person, whether it is a single parent (despite their sexual orientation) or a same sex couple, can provide a loving environment where a child can thrive, and can meet the housing and financial requirements, they will be able to adopt.

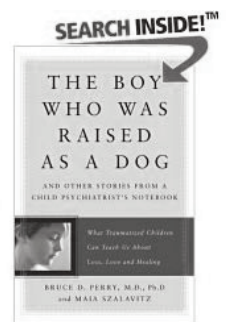
Ultimately though, the decision to place a child in a particular home is up to one person: a county judge.

TRAC Book Review Jessica Wilson

The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog: And Other Stories from a Child Psychiatrist's Notebook: What Traumatized Children Can Teach Us About Loss, Love, and Healing

By Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D. and Maia Szalavitz

Dr. Bruce Perry is an internationally recognized authority on child trauma and crisis who for decades has been putting himself on the frontlines to examine the long term effects of trauma in people from children to adults and its effects on the development and biology of the brain. *The Boy Who Was Raised As a Dog* is a series of short and gut-wrenching case studies of traumatized children including, among others, a three year old girl who had her throat slit after being the sole witness to the horrific rape and murder of her own mother, to 21 child survivors from the Branch Davidian Compound in Waco, Texas, as well as a boy who lived the first five years of his life in a dog kennel. We follow Perry as he delves into some very dark places and begins to develop the ground work for his sometimes controversial theories on neuroscience and biology as it relates to early childhood trauma. Written with masterful simplicity, those of us who may stumble over even pronouncing the word cytoarchitectonic and don't know our neocortex from a hole in the ground will be able to grasp with ease the basic ideas behind Perry's neurobiological studies. For the layperson interested in these "new" theories, this book is an excellent introductory point. And while the scientific aspect of this book is an essential layer, *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog* functions on many levels. It is part autobiography, part instruction manual, part self-help, as well as just incredible stories of the triumph of the human spirit. At the core of this multi-faceted read is Perry's ideal that "Relationships are the agents of change and the most powerful therapy is human love." Overall, this book should be required reading for therapists, for parents, for those subjected to trauma in the past, and for human beings at large.



Available at www.amazon.com

These titles and more are available through the Ada Tessaro Memorial Library.

TRAC's Waiting Children

Meet Tariq

Birth Date: 10/20/1993

PAE #: 8531 TRAC #: 7402



Tariq is a very handsome and energetic young man. He has a great smile that just lights up a room when you see it. He is a very personable young man and you can't help but want to talk to him and hang around him. He is doing very well in his current placement and is anxiously awaiting a permanent home.

Tariq does enjoy school and is doing well. He likes science, and he does seem to be pretty happy with everything he attends in school.

Tariq loves to play video games. He likes Mortal Kombat and practically any other game he can play. He loves to read game magazines and loves to play his Gameboy. Tariq also loves sports and being active. Soccer is his favorite sport, but he also likes to play basketball and tennis. Tariq is also a big air hockey player and is very hard to beat. He likes to play board games and he definitely likes to win at anything he does.

A good family for Tariq would have a lot of love and time to give to him and would need to be able to help him reach his full potential. Tariq is legally free for adoption and all families will be considered for him.

For more information on Tariq or adoption in general please contact Sheila Hill at Three Rivers Adoption Council at 412-471-8722 shill@3riversadopt.org.

Meet Brent

Birth Date: 5/22/94

PAE#: 10418 TRAC#: 8396

Brent is a very nice young man, who is very curious about things. He enjoys playing video games and playing outside. Brent loves baseball and playing with all of his matchbox cars. Cars are his favorite things and once he gets to know you he may even let you help him line them all up.

He is a very kind child and likes animals. Brent also loves stickers and loves to put them on his mirror in his room. Brent also loves music. He loves to listen to his CDs everyday and dance and sing around the house. When asked what a family is to him he replies, "Someone to love me!!!" Brent needs a special family who is willing to support him through all of his special needs and can help him reach his full potential. A two parent home or a family with older children would be most appropriate for Brent. Could this special child be the right match for your family??



For more information on Brent or adoption please contact Sheila Hill at Three Rivers Adoption Council at 412-471-8722 shill@3riversadopt.org.

Meet the Leeman Family

Ethan and Christina are a caring couple with a lot of love to give. They both have encouraging extended families and strong friendships that are a great support to them. Ethan and Christina spend a lot of their time with family member's children and have always wanted a family of their own. They currently do not have any children.

Ethan and Christina love helping others and particularly enjoy children. Christina's father is employed with Children Youth and Families, the couple is well aware of the many children in need of a good home. In addition, Christina's sister has adopted children and the Leemans have witnessed the positive changes that can occur with permanency.

Ethan has a great sense of humor and a general kindness. He has an easy smile and sincere manner. Christina is effortlessly kind and warm with a contagious laugh, also has a good sense of humor. She loves to laugh and is an avid reader and enjoys this time alone, but also cherishes her time with Ethan and their pets.



Ethan and Christina are looking to adopt an infant to three-year-old of either gender and any race or ethnic background. They would consider a sibling group of no more than two children on a case-by-case basis.

To find out more about these or other TRAC Waiting Families contact Kelly Sagel at 412-471-8722 ksagel@3riversadopt.org

Meet the Yungwirth Family



Stephen and Shelly do not have children of their own, but have a wealth of experience in dealing and working with them. Stephen has 8 brothers and sisters and Shelly would often watch after her younger brother. They have also provided professional services to children with special needs.

Stephen and Shelly enjoy fishing together, eating, watching television, going shopping, visiting the cottage, and just spending time together. They do everything together and are best friends.

Stephen and Shelly are looking to adopt a Caucasian child between 0 and 10 years old, but their ideal child would be a 4 or 5 year old. The couple would prefer a male child, but are willing to accept a female child in a boy-girl sibling group.

TRAC's Waiting Families

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Another retreat season has passed and we are proud to report success! The Parents Only Retreat was held on January 12-14, 2007 at Jumonville Retreat Center. Although it was cold outside, parents had the chance to spend time together and were treated to romantic alone time at the Inn at Jumonville. Speaker Bonnie McNally-Brown, LPC, presented up-to-date information on attachment issues and brain trauma.

Jumonville Retreat Center was also the site for the Mother/Daughter retreat on February 23-25, 2007. The weekend was filled with fun, games, and crafts and a candid discussion about sexuality. Mothers and daughters of all ages had the chance to spend quality time building and maintaining their relationships.

March 16-18, 2007 was the Teen Retreat held at Gilmary Retreat Center. In spite of a snow storm, several teens came to enjoy the fun-filled weekend. Self esteem and the media was the topic of this weekend. John Cater, anchor for KDKA was our guest speaker. Mr. Cater talked about how images and people are portrayed in the media and how that can affect each of us. The weekend closed with a St. Patrick's Day Party with fun, food, and movies.

Back to Jumonville for the Father/Son Retreat April 20-22, 2007. This weekend was an opportunity for fathers and sons to come together and spend some quality time. Dads learned from John McParlane, Clinical Director of TRAC about the power of trauma to impact their sons' development; the boys worked on being young men in 2007 with Montae Nicholson from Family Resources.

Finally, the most exciting part of the retreat season still to come! What you have all been waiting for! TRAC's Full Family Retreat is back on June 15-17, 2007 at Gilmary Retreat Center, Coraopolis. This weekend will focus on our amazing brains. Friday evening will kick off the retreat with a carnival for the whole family. On Saturday, parents will have the opportunity to meet with Bonnie McNally-Brown, LPC, to learn about the most recent brain research. Kids 7 and up will do some fun activities and learn how our brains work. Kids under 7 will have supervised child care. Saturday afternoon provides the family's choice of swimming, arts and crafts, and outdoor games. After dinner, parents will get a chance to relax without the kids. Kids will have a movie and recreation time. Overall, this is going to be a great weekend and it only costs \$15 per family! If you and your family would like to attend this retreat or have any questions, please contact Debb Little at 412-471-8722 or visit our website at www.3riversadopt.org. We are looking forward to seeing you there!

Save the Date for The Dave Thomas Celebrity Cookoff Bridget Clement

It time to get ready for the 8th Annual Dave Thomas Celebrity Cookoff to benefit TRAC. This year's event is scheduled for Tuesday, September 25, 2007. We are looking forward to an exciting evening of great celebrities and many laughs. The cookoff offers two seating options - one at 6:30 PM the other at 8:30 PM - a silent auction full of cool items, a 50/50 raffle and cocktail hour. The day of the event a huge tent is erected in the parking lot of the Benihana Restaurant. In the tent folks are encouraged to mingle have a drink or two bid on some auction items and enjoy the music. This truly is a great event for a very wonderful cause.

If you'd like more information on the cookoff please contact Bridget Clement 412-471-8722 or via email at beclement@3riversadopt.org.

Hope to see you on September 25!!

TRAC will be holding its annual Celebration of Families in just a few short months! This year's event will take place on Saturday, August 25th at the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium. The Celebration of Families is a fun-filled day for families interested in or involved with adoption. While it is an exciting day with music, lunch and activities for the kids, it also focuses on promoting adoption awareness and serves as a matching event with generally over 50 children being presented! Inside the Education Building you will find a beautiful photo gallery of waiting children, as well as a number of adoption resources. In past years, over 15-20 adoption and foster care agencies, as well as county CYF representatives have been present to share information and answer questions.

This year will also include several activities for families and kids, including digital fingerprinting and safety awareness provided by Guardian Services. Face painting, an art table, animal encounters and crafts are just a few things the kids can experience and enjoy.

TRAC is again very excited for this year's Celebration of Families, as we are confident that it will again be a great day to learn, share stories, spend time with wonderful families and just have some good light-hearted fun! So, watch for your invitations in the mail and make sure to save the date. It's an event you won't want to miss. Hope to see you there!

TRAC TV Bridget Clement

Three Rivers Adoption Council is thrilled to announce that our very first TV show, "Welcome to Adoption" is now airing on PC-TV channel 21. This first show gives general information on adoption as well as highlights six waiting children throughout. The children very candidly discuss their desire for a family and how they would like to be viewed in the eyes of the community.

This is the first TV show TRAC will produce but certainly not the last. For the next fiscal year TRAC has planned to produce four 30 minute shows that will address many adoption issues. These will also focus on the services provided by TRAC and some of the successes that happen everyday for families built by adoption. This is a great opportunity for you to see how people can and do make the difference in the life of waiting children every day.

If you have any adoption stories or a waiting child that you would like to see featured in an upcoming episode of TRAC's PC-TV show please contact Bridget Clement at 412-47-8722 ext. 210 or via email at beclement@3riversadopt.org

TRAC in the spotlight

be sure to catch "Welcome To Adoption" at one of the following times on PC-TV Channel 21

Tue, June 12	9:00 AM
Thu, June 14	12:00 PM
Mon, June 18	7:00 PM
Thu, June 21	5:00 PM
Sat, June 23	7:00 PM

Meet The Staff

Peter Zama

There are a lot of new and exciting changes happening here at TRAC. But, as always, at the heart of it all lay our recruiting efforts. We rely on these grassroots efforts through community and church outreach not only to educate the public about adoption and get the word out about TRAC, but to find the many wonderful families willing to provide loving homes for children in need. We have recently had the pleasure of two new additions to the TRAC's recruiting initiative, Michael Tintera and Cliff Charlton. It all starts with these guys.

Michael Tintera, Family Recruiter

Michael Tintera is a 25 year old from Harrison City with a background in education from University of Pittsburgh.

How did you end up with TRAC? What were some of the motivating factors in your decision to be a TRAC recruiter?

Because of the [SWAN Grant], TRAC was spreading into Westmoreland County, and Ja-Neen [Jones] stated that TRAC would like to hire someone who knows the area. I think that played a minor role in my hiring. With my teaching degree and not being able to find a teaching job, I wanted to do something sort of similar to teaching, basically, not doing the same thing day after day. After talking to some people about the recruitment field I found that a lot of what I learned through college could be applied in this field. Once I decided that I wanted to be a recruiter I just started looking everywhere for an opening. Luckily, I found one at a place where not only are the people great but the cause is just as great.

What are some of the goals you would like to accomplish as a TRAC recruiter?

Short-term, I would love to get as many athletes from the Steelers and Pens for the celebrity cook-off as I can. Long term, I hope to be able to work with many different big name corporations like Highmark and Mellon, giving presentations or whatever they will allow me so that I can really get the TRAC name into the business world.

Any personal touches or ideas you hope to bring to the job, or already have?

With recruitment, much like teaching, I think that you have to try some things before you find your groove. The personal touch I think I have really been using is delivering presentations with a teachers lesson plan set up, as well as trying to get into all the area school districts.

Cliff Charlton, Family Recruiter

Cliff Charlton is a Pittsburgh native who grew up in Homewood and was a morning jock for WAMO. You might find him doing stand-up comedy at the Improv or the Funny Bone, but during the day he's out hustling for TRAC.

You were previously a DJ/radio personality for WAMO? How does that translate to what you are now doing for TRAC?

When I was on the radio I was deep in the community. I worked community day events, talked to kids at the Sherman center, volunteered for the Lemington Home and for Westwood Nursing Home, where I still play oldies once a month for their happy hour.

How did you end up with TRAC? What were some of the motivating factors in your decision to be a TRAC recruiter?

I got involved with TRAC because I care about kids. I worked for Three Rivers Youth for years before WAMO and this keeps me connected with families and kids.

What are some of the goals you have as a TRAC recruiter?

My goal is to find families for as many kids as I possibly can and get out as much information as possible so the whole state can know about TRAC.

Any personal touches or ideas you hope to bring to the job?

I just want to do the best job I can do because every child needs a family.

On October 11-14, Encountering New Worlds of Adoption, the Second International Conference on Adoption and Culture, will bring 80 speakers to the University of Pittsburgh. This conference will consider how adoption today is redefining family, parenthood, identity, and how adoptees, birth parents, and adoptive parents are redefining adoption. Literary critics, creative writers, anthropologists, philosophers, historians, sociologists, legal theorists, psychologists, filmmakers, activists, and others, from Spain, Norway, China, Russia, England, Australia, and Canada as well as the US, will speak. Many speakers will discuss aspects of transnational and transracial adoption, especially child-rearing issues; there will also be sessions dealing with open adoption, adoptee identity, legislation about birth records, same-sex and special-needs adoption, relinquishment, blog dialogues between adoptive and birth mothers, adoption novels, adoption history, and many other topics. Specially featured are three keynote speakers, Susan Bordo, Emily Prager, and Dorothy Roberts, and the filmmaker Phil Bertelsen. These and other plenary sessions will be open to the public.

Susan Bordo is Professor of English and Gender and Women's Studies and holds the Otis A. Singletary Chair in the Humanities at the University of Kentucky. She will speak on "Will the "Real" Parent (s) (s) (s) (s) Please Step Forward?: Beyond Our Fantasies and Fears about Open Adoption." She has written about adoption, drawing on her experiences as an adoptive mother in an open transracial adoption, in a number of essays, most recently "Cassie's Hair." She is well-known for influential books such as *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*, which analyzes the cultural causes of eating problems. She will speak at 11 a.m. Saturday October 13.

Emily Prager, who will speak on "Adoption--A Two-Way Street," is the author of the memoir *Wuhu Diary: On Taking My Adopted Child Back to Her Hometown in China*. (Random House, 2001). She is also a novelist, a humor writer, and an award-winning journalist. She will speak Thursday, October 11, at 8 p.m.

Dorothy Roberts is the Kirkland & Ellis Professor at Northwestern University School of Law with joint appointments in the Departments of African American Studies and Sociology (by courtesy) and a faculty fellow for the Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern University. She will speak on "Adoption and Culture: The Difference Politics Makes." She is the author of the award-winning *Shattered Bonds: The Color of Child Welfare* and *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*. She serves on the board of directors of the Black Women's Health Imperative and the National Coalition for Child Protection Reform, and on a panel overseeing foster care reform in Washington State. Her current research examines the concentrated involvement of child welfare agencies in African-American neighborhoods. Her talk will be Friday, October 12, at 1:45.

Phil Bertelsen will show and discuss his film *Outside Looking In* at 8 p.m. Saturday October 13. He was transracially adopted in the 1970s, and in this film, as writer and director, he explores his own experience, that of his 11-year old nephew, also transracially adopted, and that of a mid-western white couple adopting an African-American child in 2001. He made this award-winning film, he says, inspired by "the tension between an internal and external identity, between a cultural legacy and a family history."

Other plenary sessions include anthropologists' discussions of international adoption, and readings by adoption memoirists, including adoptee and therapist Betty Jean Lifton, birth mothers Lorraine Dusky, Margaret Moorman, Sheila Ganz, and Mary Anne Cohen, adoptive parents Jeanne Marie Laskas and Nancy McCabe, and (showing her film *The Triumvirate*, about searching for her birthmother and her birthmother's birthmother) Jean Strauss, and much more. In the concurrent sessions, some speakers of special interest include Ralph Savarese, reading from his recent book about raising an adopted son with autism, Joyce Maguire Pavao, responding as a psychologist to open adoption and artificial insemination, and Chris Winston, who began the Korean American Adoptee Adoptive Family Network, discussing adoptive parents, race, and children's ethnic communities.

For more information about the program and registration, see the website www.english.pitt.edu/events/adoptionandculture/ or contact Marianne Novy at adoptnew@pitt.edu.



Kids Komer Jennie Thye

Rain Sticks that really sound like rain.

You will need:

Long tubes from gift wrap or paper towel

Strips of cardboard

Paper

Tape

Seeds or rice

Cut out two 4 inch circles out of the paper (trace a cereal bowl for the shape).

Put one over the end of the tube, and fold the sides down, and tape around the tube. Make sure it is well taped on and use sturdy paper so that your Rain Stick won't leak!

Cut cardboard strips that are narrower than the tube. Fold them back and forth like a fan. Put the strips into the tube. The first one should fall to the bottom of the tube. Keep adding strips until they reach the top of the tube.

Pour in 1/4 cup of rice and 2 tbsp of seeds (dried peas, popcorn, or lentils) into the tube.

Tape the other circle over the open end of the tube and tape in place.

Decorate the tube with markers, paints, or by gluing on paper or ribbon.

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