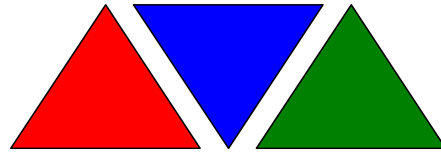


www.afteryouadopt.org
(860) 219-9573



After You Adopt, Inc.

January 2007

Volume VII, Issue 42

Newsletter Editor: Keith Hughes

Dear Families,

Happy New Year to you all! Hopefully, the cold weather that is upon us will banish the colds and coughs that so many of us had in December.

If you're looking for some family activities this winter, please consider these special AYA events:

February 11, the AYA Kids Club: If you have a child between the ages of 5 and 12, encourage them to come to the Valley Community Baptist Church in Avon. More information inside the newsletter.

March 11th, we will have our 8th Annual Cultural Potluck for families. This is a very popular event which attracts 30-35 families each year. The kids have a great time and the parents get a chance to meet one another. It takes a lot of hands to organize and set up for this event, so please consider offering to help out when the invitations go out in February.

Later this year, AYA will offer a workshop that will help to provide kids with strategies for handling questions from peers and others about their adoption/family. This workshop is for kids ages 6-12. More info inside. It is a 4 hour workshop broken into two sessions that are each 2 hours long.

If you've enjoyed being a part of AYA and value what we offer, please consider stepping up and taking over some of the responsibilities of the group.

Thank you to Keith and MJ Hughes for taking on the newsletter, Marlene and Kathleen for continuing the Kids Club, Trish Hablutzel for volunteering to take over the Saturday story hours/family walks for the Farmington Valley, and Maggie Bierbaum for organizing east of the river family activities. If you have some new ideas for the group, ideas for topics, speakers, please contact me. This is your group, so please be active!

As always, I thank you for your support and encouragement. I love to get news of new members coming into your families. If you have concerns or need a resource/professional for your family, please don't hesitate to ask for a referral. If I don't have the answer, someone in our membership probably does. Please use our listserv on yahoo groups. Post your questions to the group. Families helping families, that's why we're here!

Lastly, my family is moving (this week) to Windsor! I started a teaching job in Windsor this fall and my husband already works in Windsor, so the commute wasn't making much sense. With that, we will not have a February meeting. If you need to reach me, you can do so via email, but bear with me if I don't get back to you in a timely manner!

As we look towards planning for next year, we will need to think about other locations for our monthly meetings-somewhere between Avon and Windsor. We could alternate locations or someone could facilitate the meeting if I cannot make it. I hope to see all of you at our spring social. Until then, have a happy, healthy winter!

Bunny

Special thanks to the following members who have volunteered to lend a hand this year to AYA: If you have ideas or wish to help, please contact them.

Saturday Playgroup/Family Outings: Farmington Valley– Trish Hablutzel, 860– 313-0201,
east of the river: Maggie Bierbaum 860-432-3111

Kids Club coordinators: Marlene Lindquist, 673-2350 and Kathleen Berry, 561-0133

Publicity: Diane Lipari Liparidj@aol.com

Mailings: Marianna Milheiro

Newsletter: Keith & MJ Hughes

MEMBERSHIP

AYA is open to all. Annual dues are \$25.00 starting in January payable to **AYA**. Please call (860) 219-9573 if you need an application or online at www.afteryouadopt.org

Dues include a quarterly newsletter, a membership directory, monthly meetings and materials.

Non-members are asked to give \$5 per meeting.

DISCLAIMER

This newsletter is meant as a resource only and is not intended to be used as a definitive guideline for any matter. Views expressed are solely for information purposes only. The authors and editors will not be responsible for any loss or damage due to its content or readers' actions thereof.

Bunny Lewis

Please address all correspondence to:

AYA

P.O. Box 143

Canton, CT 06019

You can reach me at:

(860) 219-9573

Afteryouadopt@comcast.net

AYA'S GOALS

The goal of the *After You Adopt* Support Group is to assist parents who have adopted with parenting/adoption issues for both domestic and international adoptions.

AYA'S OBJECTIVES

To provide families formed through adoption: support, education, information and resources.

To provide an opportunity for children to meet one another. For children to make a connection with others from their native country.

To draw from each person in the AYA group so that all persons have equal opportunity to share information that is helpful and positive.

To enlighten adoptive parents regarding developmental issues and specific milestones concerning both birth and adoptive children.

To recognize a healthy balance between adoption issues and basic developmental issues.

AYA'S PHILOSOPHY

We believe that interaction with other families formed through adoption is a benefit to us as parents, as well as to our children, both today and in the future.

We believe that children who are available for adoption should be permanently placed in loving and nurturing Families.

We believe it is important to have fun and enjoy each other. Humor and good times are essential to all.

If you have an email address, please send it to me so that I can keep you posted on upcoming AYA events and meetings. Email Bunny at afteryouadopt@comcast.net.

Join the AYA listserv: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/afteryouadopt/>

AYA Board of Directors:

President: Paul Lewis

Vice President: Christopher Montes

Treasurer: Beth Kandrysawtz

Secretary: Margaret Glinn Fontaine
Jon Lindquist

Keith Hughes

Bunny Lewis

Trish Hablutzel

AYA Kids' Club

AYA Kids Club : 2006-2007 Dates

A Great Way to Make New Friends

The AYA Kids Club is for children ages 6 to 12. Games, Crafts, Outdoor Play, Snack and a whole lot of fun! Sundays from 2:00-4:00 p.m. held at the Valley Community Baptist Church. \$2.00 per child. This is a way for our children to get together on a more regular basis for some fun. If you'd like to help out or have questions, please call Marlene Lindquist at 673-2350 or Kathleen Berry at 561-0133. You may drop off your child, but we ask that you sign up for a date to take a turn staying to supervise. Thanks!

Upcoming "Kids Club" Dates: Feb. 11th, April 22nd, May 20th

Special Workshop for Kids

A W.I.S.E. Up! Workshop is being planned to help provide children with strategies for handling questions from their peers about their adoption. This highly interactive class will be limited to 12 participants. The workshop is open to children 6-12 years old.

Lynn Gabbard, social worker from Lutheran Social Services, along with 2 adult adoptees will facilitate these workshops. Lynn meets with the parents while the adult adoptees work with the children. Children will be grouped by age. Using the book, W.I.S.E. Up! Powerbook by Marilyn Schoettle, Children will discuss and role-play 4 strategies: Walk away, It's private, Share something, Educate them. There will be a fee per child registered. The fee covers the cost of the book, refreshments, and the 4 hour workshop. The workshop is limited to 12 participants, so please register early. Priority will be given to children of paid AYA members. Invitations will be emailed to AYA members in February.

Dates and times: Sundays March 25th and April 1 from 2-4 PM

Location: Valley Community Baptist Church, Avon

Cost: \$50 per child \$40 per child, if you already own the book.

*******Each child needs own book.**

Big Event

Mark Your Calendars!

AYA 8th Annual Cultural Potluck

A place for families to get educated while having fun!

Sunday, March 11, 2007 3:00-6:00 p.m.
Valley Community Baptist Church
590 West Avon Road, Avon CT 06001

Games and crafts for the kids, Games in the gym for kids (8+),
Get to know you game and Silent Auction for the grown-ups
Family photo, Entertainment , Plenty of delicious food!

Open to all adoptive families and prospective adoptive families.

Come meet other families with children from around the world!

Fun for the whole family!

Paid AYA members- \$5 paid in advance

Non-members- \$10 paid in advance

\$10 for all families paying at the door

Invitations will be mailed/emailed out in February

**We need lots of Volunteers (Trish Hablutzel is coordinating volunteers)
(please sign up to organize an activity):**

- games and crafts – coloring, play dough, cut & paste activities
- crafts for the older kids 8+ - we need your ideas
- purchasing supplies – tablecloths, papergoods, cutlery, beverages, centerpieces (AYA will reimburse)
- setting up – tables, chairs, crafts, decorations, etc.
- Silent auction items ([e-mail Keith Hughes-jugglejoy@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Keith.Hughes-jugglejoy@sbcglobal.net))

(by facilitating an activity you will help ensure success of party)

Please contact Trish Hablutzel at 313-0201 or e-mail trishk@hablutzel.com if you can help.

Board Members Needed

The AYA Board of Directors is looking for nominations of members to join our Board. The Board meets four times throughout the year (October, January, April, July). This is not a large time commitment, but it is a commitment that is needed to keep the organization vibrant and continuing.

The Board helps in planning and carrying out the activities that AYA offers its membership from *playgroups to *parent workshops on a list of important adoption topics to *family picnics to *bowling parties to *reading hours, the list continues.

There are four week night meetings per year. The meetings last about one and one half hours. We have two positions that need to be filled.

A reminder of AYA's Goals and Objectives might be your inspiration to come join the Board.

AYA'S GOALS

The goal of the After You Adopt Support Group is to assist parents who have adopted with parenting/adoption issues for both domestic and international adoptions.

AYA'S OBJECTIVES

To provide families formed through adoption:

support, education, information and resources.

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To enlighten adoptive parents regarding developmental issues and specific milestones concerning both birth and adoptive children.

To recognize a healthy balance between adoption issues and basic developmental issues.

The Board is seeking nominations. You can nominate yourself. Please consider becoming part of the leadership team for AYA. Your voice is important to the success of the organization. Of course the Board is also responsible for helping to oversee the group's finances. If you think that you can fit this time commitment into your schedule or know someone who can seriously consider making a nomination to the Board. (You can nominate yourself!)

If you are interested in more information on becoming part of the Board, please email Bunny at bunnylew@comcast.net.

Sincerely, Keith Hughes—Current AYA Board Member

AYA IS ALSO :

LOOKING FOR SOMEONE INTERESTED IN MANAGING OR DEVELOPING OUR
WEB-SITE WWW.AFTERYOUADOPT.ORG.

THIS ALL COULD BE DONE FROM YOUR HOME!! PLEASE CONSIDER DOING THIS
WORTHWHILE JOB.

Member Spotlight

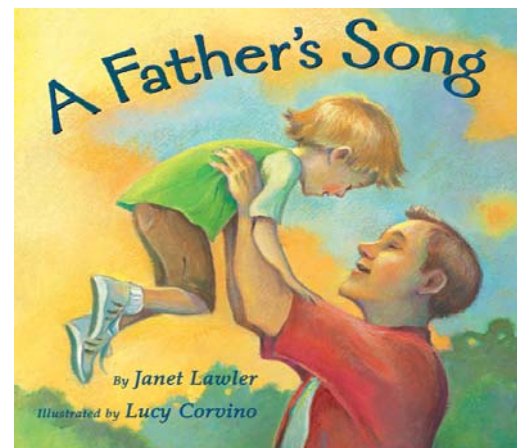
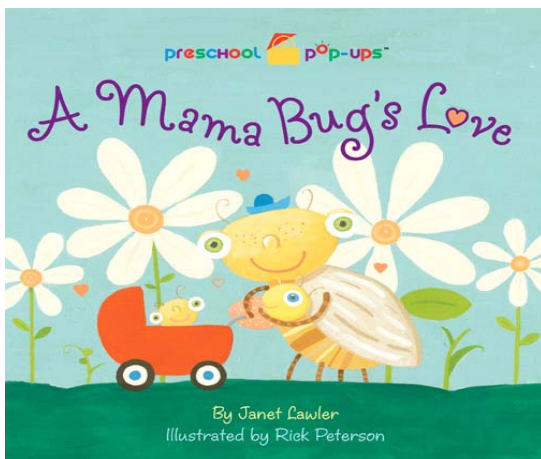
AYA member Janet Lawler launched her career as a children's author with the publication of her first picture book, *If Kisses Were Colors*, in 2003. This "mother's love poem" was inspired by her daughter Cami (now 9) who was adopted from Vietnam in 1998. *If Kisses Were Colors* is in its 5th printing and has been translated into Japanese, Korean and Spanish. It was a Book of the Month Club Main Selection and recommended by Working Mother magazine and Publishers Weekly.

Janet's second picture book, *A Father's Song*, was released in April, 2006. It celebrates the special bond between a father and child. School Library Journal says *A Father's Song* is "...an excellent book for reading aloud and sharing one-to-one."

Janet's first pop-up book, *A Mama Bug's Love*, will be available in early December. The illustrations in this sturdy board book jump off the pages to delight children and their parents.

You might have seen Janet autographing her books at the Wadsworth Athenaeum Festival of Trees Family Days in December.

Janet's books are also available at most independent and chain bookstores and on-line. You can visit her web site at www.JanetLawler.com.



AYA and Amazon.com have teamed up to bring you quality books, music, videos, and apparel. When you enter Amazon.com through our website, AYA will receive a small portion of the sales made on any Amazon.com products. Please go to www.afteryouadopt.org and click on the Amazon.com button and begin your shopping. We appreciate your support!



Book Reviews

Book Review by Janet Lawler (featured on the previous page)

It's So Amazing!

by Robie Harris (illustrated by Michael Emberley)

An adopted child cannot really understand adoption without understanding the basic facts of conception. So adoptive parents have a particularly important job regarding sex education. The use of fuzzy language and vague description can leave a child not only with misconceptions about how a child is born, but with an added layer of confusion about their own entry into this world and how a birth mother and father fit in that picture. Adoptive parents may need to start explaining things a bit early and in a bit more detail. I highly recommend a book by Robie H. Harris, illustrated by Michael Emberley.

It's So Amazing! (Age 7 and up/Grade 2 and up, according to publisher Candlewick Press) is an extremely comprehensive guide answering nearly every question about birth, babies, bodies, families and healthy sexuality. For many children, the younger version of this book may be a good starting point – **It's NOT the Stork!** (Age 4 and up/Preschool and up). My 9-year-old daughter, Cami, is extremely curious and we have had lots of talks. I still would likely not have used **It's So Amazing!** before this year. There is a lot of detail to absorb (the book is 80 pages and chock full of information). It is not a book to finish in one sitting.

The illustrations are a tremendous complement to the text and make the author's explanations very kid friendly. They are cartoon-like and full of love. The recurring characters (the Bird and the Bee) make humorous quips in dialogue bubbles on every page, like "This is embarrassing!" just when maybe the parent and/or child is feeling that way. There is quite a conversation among the many illustrated sperm both before and after the moment of conception. Sometimes, Cami and I took turns being Bird and Bee after I read the text on a particular page.

There is a chapter (each chapter is only a couple of pages) on Becoming a Family, sub-headed, "By Birth – By Adoption". Cami especially loved the closing dialogue. Bee says, "Adoption's an awesome thing!" and Bird gives a thumbs up. "It's an awesome way to make a family!" There is also a chapter entitled,

"Let's Celebrate!", sub-headed, "Happy Birth Day! Happy Adoption Day!" that shares information on how different countries celebrate the arrival of a new child. (cont. 8)



Book Reviews Continued

(cont. from page 7)

Caveat – Parents *must* read through the whole book first to decide if it is right for them and their children. The author's approach is a very open one – nothing is skipped regarding issues of sexuality and there are no religious slants given to facts presented. Topics include homosexuality, sexual abuse, AIDS/HIV, birth control. So if your family has particular beliefs and approaches to certain issues, you may want to decide how to handle those. One way is to just be sure to have further dialogue, as you read, regarding your beliefs, or to skip pages. But remember, curious kids will want to pick this book up and keep reading on their own, as Cami has done several times.

Finally, there is a third book in this series that deals with puberty and adolescence. I cannot comment on that one since I have not yet read it, but for those of you who want to take a look and evaluate, it is entitled, **It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing up, Sex and Sexual Health**. (ages 10 and up).

(Janet's daughter Cami Coppage was adopted from Vietnam 9 years ago.

Janet is a children's author. Her latest book, *A Mama Bug's Love*, is a humorous pop-up book about how mother bugs show their love. *If Kisses Were Colors* and *A Father's Song* celebrate family bonds. Learn more about her work at www.JanetLawler.com)

Family Fun

Cultural Fun for Families by M.J. Moriarty

Looking for fun cultural events that celebrate the diversity of your family's heritage? Want to introduce your child to quality musical and performing arts experiences without breaking the bank? Hoping to expand your own horizons as well as your children's? The answer is simple: go to college!

Local universities and colleges offer an amazing array of free and low-cost concerts, plays and workshops perfect for families to enjoy together (or for inexpensive nights out for parents).

The bonus part of attending an event on a college campus is the campus itself. To our four-year-old son James, college quads are the ultimate playgrounds. He loves the huge open spaces to run around in and he always finds something interesting: students playing cricket at University of Hartford, an ultimate frisbee game at Yale, and friendly young women to flirt with . . . everywhere.

Family Fun Continued

We have enjoyed programs at Trinity College www.trincoll.edu (summer carillon concerts on the lawn), St. Joseph College www.sjc.edu (Little Theatre of the Deaf) and University of Hartford www.hartford.edu (student recitals and giant puppet-making). Each spring, University of Hartford hosts a Community Day with all sorts of free performances, activities and food. This year's Community Day will be Saturday, April 21.

Farther afield, but well worth the trip, Connecticut College in New London hosts the annual Connecticut Storytelling Festival the last weekend of April. This year, the Friday night Family Concert on April 27 will feature Eth-Noh-Tec, an internationally-renowned, award-winning San Francisco-based Chinese-Filipino-Japanese-American dance-mime-storytelling troupe that is talented and hyphenated enough to make the whole family happy. (\$10 adults/\$5 children, for more information: www.connstorycenter.org)

For my money (and very little of it), the school with the most exciting and diverse offerings is Wesleyan University in Middletown. This spring alone, Wesleyan's Center for the Arts is hosting at least five family-friendly events worth noting. On March 3, the free Carnival Children's Concert features an instrument petting zoo and mask-making. Children are encouraged to wear costumes and nobody looks sideways at a three-year-old dancing in the aisles. www.wesleyan.edu/cfa

Wesleyan's Chinese Music Concert on April 29 (\$4 admission), Korean Drumming Concert on May 2 (\$3 admission) and West African Drumming and Dance Concert on May 11 (free) promise a feast of international musical experiences. And I'm already tapping my feet in anticipation of "Mixin' It Up: Adventures in Yiddish Swing" on April 15 (free). (For more information: www.wesleyan.edu/cfa)

All of the colleges above have well-designed web-sites with easily accessible events calendars. Sometimes they want you to pre-register for shows, even if they are free, but usually you can just show up. Please check the college calendars for times, locations, and suggested age ranges for the events noted above. We'll see you there!

Upcoming Parent Meetings
April 12 and May 10, more information to follow.

Story Hour for Families

When: Saturday March 31, 2007

Where: Canton Public Library

With: Cheryl Donahue, Children's Librarian, comes in just for our program

When: 10:30 to 11:30 AM

Free to AYA Members

Please sign up on advance with Trish K Hablutzel either by:

Phone at 860-313-0201 or e-mail trishk@hablutzel.com

Join us for stories, songs, and snacks!

This special program is designed for our group. The librarian comes in special on her day off. Please come out and enjoy along with your children, wonderful stories and activities just for our group!

Bowling Fun!



Having Fun at the Bowling Alley!!!!!!!!!!



Who Knows How to Keep Score?

Everyone who came to the AYA Bowling Event on Sunday January 21, 2007 HAD A GREAT TIME! It was run as part of the Sunday Kids' Club Group! (Think about trying out this activity) The event was held at the Rock N Bowl in Simsbury. Everyone Rocked and Bowled! There were about 15 children and 15 parents. They all had fun! Keep your eyes on your e-mail for more upcoming events. Think about planning an event. Come up with a family event and share it with the membership. Hope to see you at the Rock N Bowl the next time we Strike Out!

January Membership Drive

AJA Board has changed our membership year to coincide with the calendar year. Therefore, if you haven't paid your 2007 membership dues (\$25), it's not too late!

22 families paid their membership dues this fall. They are paid up until December 2007.

Many of you have been members in the past. If you value what AJA provides for families, please fill out your membership form and mail it back with your \$25 dues. Thanks!



If you haven't signed on to the After You Adopt listserv on Yahoo Groups, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/afteryouadopt/>
By joining the listserv (no fee) you have the ability to ask questions of other adoptive parents or share some adoption news, events, experiences that you've had.



Many of you will be registering your child for Kindergarten this year and will need to bring a birth certificate. For children born outside the U.S., you can get a CT Certificate of Birth by doing the following:
If your child's adoption was finalized at a Probate court in CT or if the adoption was finalized in the country of birth (Russia), you need to authenticate/validate the adoption in a CT Probate court (call your town Probate court for the paper work). Once you have done this, call the State of CT, Dept. of Public Health, Adoption Unit at (860) 509-7956 and tell them your child's name and month/year of finalization. They will look it up right then and there, and if they have your child's records, they will then mail you the application for a CT certificate of birth. It costs \$15. Schools will most likely accept the foreign birth certificate, but you're better off for the future, having the CT certificate.

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LOOK INSIDE FOR:

- **Membership Information**
- **How you can help AYA**
- **AYA Kids' Club meets Feb. 11th**
- **8th Annual Cultural Potluck-March 11th**
- **W.I.S.E. Up Workshop for Kids- March 25, April 1**

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Canton, CT 06019