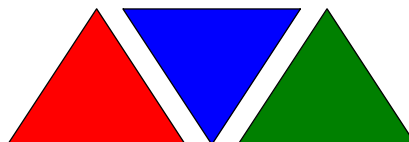


May 2007

[www.afteryouadopt.org](http://www.afteryouadopt.org)

(860) 219-9573



After You Adopt, Inc.

Volume VIII, Issue 43

Newsletter Editor: Keith Hughes

Dear AYA Families,

We've had some wonderful events since February! Hope you were able to take part in them.

If not there are plenty of photos in this newsletter.

The AYA Cultural Potluck took place on March 11 with 21 families enjoying a variety of activities and all sorts of Great Food! Here are a sample of some of the activities at the Potluck: Live Music with Carrie Davis, Scrap booking with Cathi Nelson, Silent Auction with all sorts of goodies, Craft Tables, Family Pictures, GREAT PEOPLE, GREAT KIDS, and GREAT FOOD! If you missed the Potluck plan on coming to AYAs End of the Summer Party. Look for information in your e-mail.

Carrie Davis was very generous and donated a class to the Silent Auction. Her business is called "Music Time with Carrie Davis". Carrie holds classes for infants and parent all the way up to 5 year olds. Classes are held at Perfect Parties in Canton, call 860-658-7541 for more information.

Special Thanks to the following people for their help with Spring Cultural Potluck: Trish Hablutzel, Kathleen Berry, Margaret Fontaine, Lisa Wetjen, Janet, Abel, Marianna rivers, and MJ Moriarty and everyone who helped with set up, clean up, and made donations to our silent auction.

The WISE UP Workshop was a Big Hit with children and parents. It took place on March 25 and April 1, 2007. Lynn Gabbard from Lutheran Social Services along with three young adult adoptee were excellent facilitators. She helped the student and parents feel comfortable exploring questions that adopted children face at school, from friends, with neighbors, and people that they meet everyday. The students gained new skills and insights o how to best handle personal questions.

Look inside this newsletter for upcoming events.

Look at the Fun Photos our members have been taking!

Please come to an upcoming event.

Please volunteer to help out with an event, write a piece for the newsletter, share an idea.

AYA is run by its membership. We all need to pitch in to make it successful!

Keith Hughes,

Editor and AYA Board Member

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-- open position, east of the river: Maggie Bierbaum 860-432-3111

Kids Club coordinators: Marlene Lindquist and Kathleen Berry

Publicity: Diane Lipari Liparidj@aol.com

### 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](http://www.afteryouadopt.org)

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

### 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

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](mailto:afteryouadopt@comcast.net).

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

### 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

### AYA Board of Directors:

President: Paul Lewis

Vice President: Christopher Montes

Treasurer: Beth Kandrysawtz

Secretary: Margaret Glinn Fontaine

Jon Lindquist

## Upcoming AYA Events

### [May 10 Adoptive Parent Panel organized by AYA](#)

Learn from the experiences of other adoptive parents

7:30 to 9:00 PM at Valley Community Baptist Church

590 West Avon Road, Avon CT 06001

Listen to the stories and insights of adoptive parents who have children in their 20's and early 30's who have experienced the many different stages of being an adoptive parent. These parents are friends of WISE UP program coordinator Lynn Gabbard and will share helpful information on raising healthy children.

(Story about Wise Up Program to follow on page—)

It promises to be an informative and enjoyable evening.

Please RSVP to Bunny Lewis at [Bunnylew@comcast.net](mailto:Bunnylew@comcast.net) or 860-219-9573

## Upcoming Cultural Events

Friday May 11 at 3 PM Wesleyan University [www.wesleyan.edu/cfa](http://www.wesleyan.edu/cfa)

West African Drumming and Dance (FREE)

Saturday May 12 at 7 PM

at St. James Episcopal Church, Farmington, CT

Reservations 860-462-1126

Brazilian Concert Pianist –Luiz De Moura Castro

Benefit Concert to raise money for Brazilian students

Studying at Hartt School of Music

# Our Story

Story Submitted by Trish and Bob Halbutzel

*This is a two part story from both parents' points-of-view.*

*The story takes us on the whole journey from deciding to adopt to the first moments of parenthood to reflections on being a new family. Enjoy.*

## Trish's story:

Bob and I met, fell in love, and were naming our "mythological" kids all within two weeks of knowing each other. Bob had been married before (no kids), and I had muddled through my fair share of dead-end relationships. So, knowing we were a great match, we were engaged within a year and married within 19 months.

Adoption had been a part of our conversations during our engagement. So, after trying to have kids for a couple of years, adoption felt like a natural and comfortable choice. We were ready to start a family, we weren't particularly concerned about promulgating our gene pool, and we certainly weren't getting any younger! So, we decided to go the domestic, private adoption route, and we were picked by Annabel's birth mother three months before she was born. We flew to Oklahoma to meet Christina and her 5 year old son, and she and I felt a connection that (if not for life and geographic circumstances) we would have been friends anyhow. Christina is an amazingly strong, resilient mother, who made such a courageous decision to opt for adoption as the best plan for herself, her son, and Annabel's future.

Our next trip to Oklahoma was so that we could spend more time together and meet friends and family before Anna's birth. Annabel was born at 8:07 am by caesarian section with both of her mothers holding hands, crying, and sharing, while her proud dad waited outside the operating room with his camera ready. We spent the next three nights like sardines in a can, sharing the hospital room, and caring for Annabel and Christina while family and friends visited. It was a pressure cooker of intense and mixed emotions, but ultimately forged a deep bond of more openness between us, all for the sake of our children.

The next six months were the usual craziness and bliss of new parenthood. So imagine our surprise to find out that I was pregnant! Katie was born fourteen months later, fulfilling our dream of two girls and completing our family. It has added such a rich dimension to our family to have experienced both adoption and giving birth. Every day I thank the heavens for blessing us twice!

## Bob's Story:

I knew when I met Trish that I wanted her to be the mother of my children (as a part of being my life partner). Had Trish come to my life with children I would have loved them as my own; I wanted to have a family with her but didn't think much about the genetics. I also knew I wanted to have that family soon, while she and I would be young enough to survive the experience.

One thing Trish and I share is a focus on getting things done. When we found we weren't in that percentage that gets pregnant on the first try – or the second- or the 10th - we briefly tried infertility treatments, but it really didn't match our style. We found them invasive, expensive, unreliable, and stressful ( anyone who has made trips to the bedroom based on what “Mr. Thermometer” says can relate to.) No, thank you.

Adoption was the obvious choice for us, and, after looking at and weighing the options, we decided on domestic private adoption. We had the usual ups and downs – including being matched with a birth family that decided not to place the children (twins) – but soon I found myself in the waiting room, while Trish accompanied Christina to the delivery room.

The experience was unforgettable in so many ways – holding my daughter for the first time, with her eyes looking into my soul; staying with the birthmother while she checked us out to make sure we would pass her parenting skills tests (I honestly nearly flunked us on that one, being a very inexperienced new dad, but I did get points for changing the first diaper), and even dealing with the occasional insensitive comment from some of the nursing staff at the strict Catholic hospital who viewed this as breaking up a family, not building one. I feared that these would be questions and challenges we would have to face on a daily basis, but looking back over time I think it was more a question of time and place, and of the intensity of the experience for all involved.

I'm sure there are those outside adoption looking in that wonder if the bond one feels with an adopted child can ever be as strong as that of a biological child. I'm somewhat qualified to speak to this, as we received the unanticipated but completely desired news, six months after bringing Annabel home, that Trish was pregnant. Katie was born fourteen months after Annabel – this time I got to be in the delivery room – and our family was complete.

Do I feel differently about our girls? Of course – they are different people with different personalities. But that is not to say that I love one more than the other. Plain and simple, they are my daughters – woe to anyone who comes between me and them – and I love them both with all my heart.

Adoption does bring some challenges that biological parenthood does not – having a family that 'looks different', integrating the biological parents with your child's life (our adoption is open), and, honestly, cost. But these fade out in the day to day experiences of being a family. At the end of the day, when I read “Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle” for the five thousandth time with my daughters at my side (if they ever give prizes for being able to recite “The Whisperer's Cure” from heart, I'll clean up), it's just the normal, everyday act of being a father that I always wanted.

Love is not based on DNA.

# Look at some AYA Events

## Cultural Potluck Photos Sunday March 11, 2007



Carrie Davis played guitar, sang songs and had everyone smiling, singing, and dancing along!

She even donated a series of music classes to our Silent Auction. Thanks Carrie!

### Watch Us Make Beautiful Music!



### Twisted Up at the Potluck!



### Family Fun at the Play Doh Table!





More Play Doh Fun!

This is GREAT!



SMILE!

FAMILY PHOTO!

SCRAPBOOKING  
With Cathi Nelson



What Fun!



Lots of Cool Play Things!

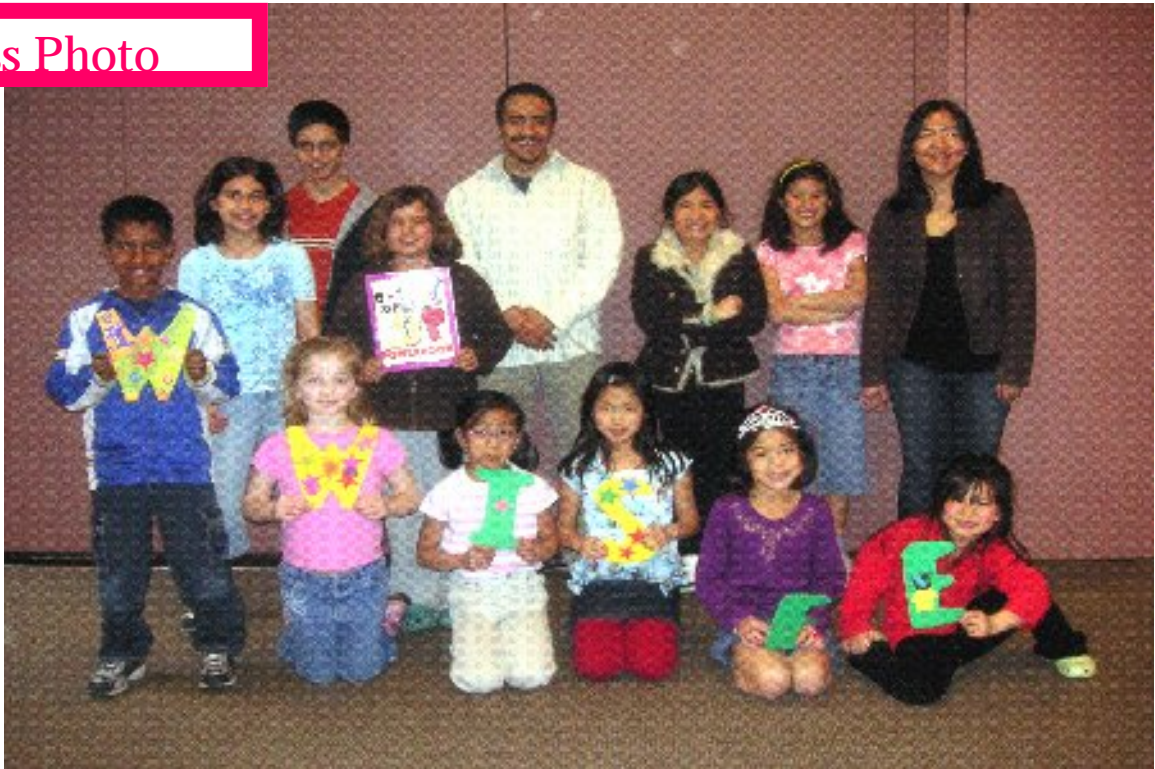
# WISE Up Workshop

(Learning How to Answer Questions About Adoption)

After You Adopt sponsored a two day workshop called Wise Up. The workshop taught strategies for handling questions from their peers about their adoption. The workshop was designed for children ages 6 to 12.

The program that was facilitated by Lynn Gabbard for Lutheran Social Services. The workshop took place over two Sundays, March 25 and April 1. Below class photo and reactions by student and parent.

## Class Photo



Student and parent reaction to the Wise Up workshop was very positive.

Victoria a 7 year-old workshop participant had this to say: I really liked the WISE workshop. It was lots of fun. I learned how to answer questions about adoption. I want to do it again!

Victoria's Mom's reaction: This workshop was great for Victoria. She loved connecting with the others in the group and the facilitators made it really fun for her. The open discussion was very empowering and gave her tools in which to respond to others on adoption. I would definitely sign her up again for the next workshop.

The adult discussion with the facilitator Lynn were very helpful for me. While kids were in their groups, we had time to share stories and family issues and learn form one another. I really appreciate the services ad support that AYA offers. Thank you!!

[Call or e-mail Bunny Lewis if you are interested in enrolling your child for a](#)

[Fall 2007 WISE UP Workshop](#)

2006-2007

Membership Form—For Renewing or New Membership

January-December, 2007

After You Adopt is a 501 (C)3 non profit organization. When paying your membership dues, please consider making a tax-deductible contribution to AYA. Your donation will be used to provide greater resources for our members. Thank you.

\*\*Would you like this information included in our membership directory? Yes/No

Parent(s) Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Children's Names	Year of birth	A-Adopted B-Biological	Country of birth

Adoption  
agency

used \_\_\_\_\_

Please respond on back if more space is needed.

1. What are you hoping for AYA to provide to you and your family?
2. What topics would you like to see addressed?
3. Would you like to host a meeting in your home? \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to After You Adopt

Membership dues \$25.00

Return this form with payment to:

After You Adopt  
check # \_\_\_\_\_

Tax-deductible contribution + \_\_\_\_\_

P.O. Box 143

Total \_\_\_\_\_

Canton, CT 06019

# 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.

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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 e-mail Bunny Lewis at [Bunnylew@comcast.net](mailto:Bunnylew@comcast.net).

Sincerely, Keith Hughes—Current AYA Board Member

(860) 219-9573

[www.afteryouadopt.org](http://www.afteryouadopt.org)

**LOOK INSIDE FOR:**

- Membership Information
- AYA Schedule of Meetings

After You Adopt

P.O. Box 143, Canton, CT 06019