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Sent: Wednesday, November 27, 2013 1:02 AM
To: scott@afamilyforeverychild.org
Subject: AFFEC Matching Assistance Program November 2013



A Family For Every Child Matching Assistance



*"We should not be asking who this child belongs to,
but who belongs to this child."*

**A Family For Every
Child** **November 2013**

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Matching Assistance Program

If you are a home study approved family seeking to adopt from foster care, consider signing up for our free Matching Assistance Program! Our goal is to work alongside families, providing them with one-on-one communication, assurance and support during the submission and waiting process.

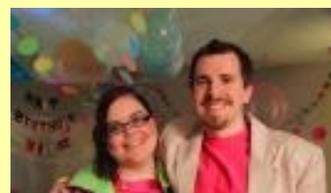
As a member of Matching Assistance you will have the ability to submit your home study and family profile for over 2000 waiting children and sibling groups listed on our site, with the assurance that your submission is going directly to a child's caseworker. Your adoption worker will be cc'd on all submissions so they remain in the loop at all times.

In addition, you will be assigned a Family Adoption Specialist volunteer to provide support, resources and guidance; you will have the opportunity to partake in our very successful recruitment options; you will receive weekly how to emails containing valuable information and resources about foster care adoption; have access to knowledgeable and helpful staff, and more! Those are just a few of our great benefits!

[Sign up](#) today to take full advantage of our free program!

Waiting Agency Family: Nicole and Jeremy

We are an active and loving couple in our mid/late 20's, who are very involved in our community. We have lots of nieces and nephews aged 2-16



years, and we have a lot of fun with our extended family! We do not have children at this time, but we are very excited to grow our family.



We are interested in adopting a single child or sibling pair of any ethnicity, between birth and six years of age. We are open to children with mild medical concerns, learning issues, and behavioral challenges. We know that a child does not have to be born to us in order to be a part of our family; we believe that the responsibility to an adopted child is no different than that of a biological child. We are respectful of our future child's cultural and ethnic background, and we plan on supporting our child/children as they grow and understand their heritage.

We are both very close to our extended families, and have regular family gatherings and traditions. Both our families actually spend some holidays together, and get together socially on a regular basis. We feel very fortunate that our extended families get along so well, and thoroughly enjoy each other's companies. Both families are tremendously supportive of our desire to grow our family through adoption. [Learn more about Nicole and Jeremy!](#)

Waiting Matching Assistance Family: Chad and Scott!

We are Chad and Scott. We are looking for a sibling group or child of any race - preferably from ages 2 to 13. We understand that, by potentially adopting a child of a different race or ethnicity, our child will need to understand that unique heritage and we are dedicated to finding appropriate ways for our child to understand the varying facets of their background. We live in a very diverse area (primarily African American) in Maryland within the DC Metro region. We understand that children in foster care come with special needs and we have the desire, energy and resources to handle those needs.



We have been together for 9 years and married for 3. Chad describes Scott as sweet, gentle, funny and patient. Scott describes Chad as loving, motivated, funny, and intelligent. As part of our family, we have three sweet,

small dogs - Max, Oliver, and Corrinne - two schnauzers and a beagle. Both of us love outdoors, camping, performing arts, sports, reading and especially traveling. We can't wait to take our children to see sporting events and plays, go camping, and experience the world. We have been all over the world- including to China, Peru, Belize, and most of Europe. After we have finalized the adoption and spent some quiet time as a family, we look forward to exploring the world as a family.

Through our agency, we have taken 27 hours of parenting classes focused on older child adoption and the unique considerations that come with children who have experienced loss. Our training helped us understand the issues related to psychological issues; the effect of abuse, neglect and loss; the unique issues of transracial and transcultural adoption; and effective discipline. [Learn more about Chad and Scott!](#)

Adoption and the Holidays

For most children, holidays are a time of joy and excitement. There are parties, gifts, and most importantly: time with family. However, not everyone feels the excitement and happiness this time of year, especially adopted children. Holidays can stir up memories of their past, which may have involved instability, trauma, a lack of presents, and no family to spend it with. Every year at this time, I have adoptive families tell me that they want a child placed with them before the holidays. While this is not possible sometimes from a logistical standpoint, they also don't factor in the trauma and negative feelings that the holidays can trigger for a child. While their heart is in the right place- they want a child to feel loved and have a family to celebrate with- it doesn't always work out in reality like they envisioned. As the child's parents, you need to understand where your child is coming from, what their past holidays were like, and be willing to be flexible with your own traditions and holiday plans.

Children who were removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect may have negative memories associated with the holiday season. They may have experienced traumatic events this time of year, which may surface during the holidays and make the child feel anxious, defiant, and sad. Your child may also have low expectations for the holiday season, and will not get excited about the fun activities you have in store. Negative behaviors may increase, and more meltdowns may occur. Visits or contact with biological family can

exacerbate these feelings, especially if the child is still emotionally attached. Your child may also feel overstimulated with the decorations, the influx of family members at the house, and by the food on the table, causing more outbursts. If your child was recently placed in the home, trying to adjust to a new family can add to their stress.

This can all be very confusing to parents, who may have anticipated that their child would be excited and happy. Parents can end up feeling hurt or rejected by their child. Understanding the reasons behind your child's behaviors and where the disconnect is can help you and your family have a happier holiday season.

The following are some steps you can take to reduce the anxiety and stressors for your child that revolve around the holiday season:

Understand where your child is coming from- Figuring out the root of your child's pain and anxiety can help you understand why your child is feeling the way he/she is, and what you can do to remedy the situation. For example, your child may get upset hearing the old adage that Santa is watching, and if they don't behave they may not get presents and will get coal instead. This may stem from the fact that the child never received presents from their biological parents because they were told they were "bad". As the child's parent, assure them that they are not "bad" and that Santa will leave them presents under the tree.

Talk to your child about their feelings- The holidays can bring up a mix of emotions. Talk to your child about how they are feeling, and why they feel that way. Acknowledge that this time of year can bring up a lot of feelings, and that it's ok to share them. Children may also worry about their biological parents. Encourage your child to send positive thoughts to their other families- both biological and foster- by saying a prayer, writing a letter, or sharing stories.

Be flexible with your traditions- Your family may have traditions for the holidays, but don't expect your child to want to participate in all of them. Understand that they may have set their own traditions with their biological or foster parents, and work to incorporate some of them into your family. This is especially important if your child practices a different religion. Serving different foods, listening to different music, and allowing your child to practice some of their religious traditions are a great way to help your child feel like they are part of your family.

Old traditions are good, but making new ones together as a family is even better.

Be flexible with your holiday plans- The holidays are often a time when all your extended family gets together. If your child has just been placed in your home, meeting all of the aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, and close family friends can add to their stress. They are trying to get to know you and adjust to their new family, so adding more people to meet is simply overwhelming. For your child's first holiday with your family, consider skipping out on the huge relative get-together. Instead, just celebrate the holidays with your immediate family, and/or one or two close relatives like the grandparents. Plan on getting together with the rest of your extended family during a non-major and more relaxed holiday, like Memorial Day or Fourth of July.

Ask your child how they want to celebrate- Traditions aside, children may have other set visions of how a holiday is supposed to go. Talk with your child about a few things they may want to do. This could be driving around to see the neighborhood houses all lit up, going to church, baking a certain dessert, etc.

If you choose to introduce your adopted child to the rest of your extended family, be mindful of the potential accidental slip-ups and insensitive remarks that may occur. While you may understand that your child's behaviors are related to his/her past, your extended family may not. If your child is of another race or culture, this may bring up even more questions and potentially hurtful comments. As the child's parent, it is up to you to educate your extended family about your child's adoption. Obviously you don't have to share every detail, and you can make it clear that your child's full story is private and that he/she will share it when they are ready. The following are a few ways you can make connecting your adopted child with your extended family go a little smoother:

- Explain to your family that your child's behaviors and mannerisms are related to their past experiences with their biological family and foster family. You don't have to go into intimate detail, but just give them an overall idea of why your child may act the way he/she does.
- Educate your family about your child's culture and/or religion. Explain to them some of the traditions your child has introduced to your family, and why it is important to you to incorporate them

into your traditions.

- Educate your family about using adoption-friendly language, and to avoid expressions such as "real parents", and "given up for adoption".
- Offer to provide your family with some books and other resources that they may check out to learn more about your child's past and their needs.
- Remember that YOU are the child's parent. While your family may have well-intentioned advice about how you should raise your child, be firm in your choices. Politely thank them for their suggestions, and kindly let them know that your child's situation may be a little different than anything they've experienced, and you are working on doing what is best for your child.

Additional Holiday Resources

The Holidays: An Opportunity for Healing by Madeleine Krebbs, LCSW-C

An article from C.A.S.E outlining how to help children cope with their emotions during the holiday season. Read the full article [here](#).

Holidays With Extended Family: An Opportunity for Connection by Ellen Singer, LCSW-C

An article from C.A.S.E. with tips on how to educate your extended family on your child's adoption, and ensure that your child will feel accepted and loved. Read the full article [here](#).

Holidays Can Bring Up Lots of Emotions by Lois Melina

An *Adoptive Families* magazine article on the impact the holidays have on your child, and how to work through their emotions with them. Read the full article [here](#).

How to Survive the Holidays When Your Heart is Breaking

from the *Adoption Goddess* blog

A blog post for parents who do not have children placed with them on how to make it through the holiday season. Read the full blog post [here](#).

Overwhelmed for the Holidays: An Adoptive Parents Guide to Navigating the Holidays

This webinar put on by Adoption Learning Partners will guide parents through understanding their child's feelings, how to remember the birth family, and how to work with your child on self-regulation skills. Purchase and watch the webinar [here](#).

*Please note: while we have not attended the webinar before, we want to give all our adoptive families support and opportunities to expand their knowledge, both before and after placement.

Recent Matches & Placements

Congratulations to the following families who were matched in October and November:

-T & R (with a child on our site!)
-M & K (with a child on our site!)
-J & D
-L & D
-C & A
-D.R (with a child on our site!)
-L & K
-L & J
-J & T (with a child on our site!)
-M & R
-S & T (with a child on our site!)
-M & J (with a child on our site!)
-C & L (with a child on our site!)
-H & K
-N & D
-J & J
-K.O.
-E & S (with a child on our site!)
-C & R
-C & S (with a child on our site!)
-L & J
-C & L

Congratulations to the following families who were placed in October and November:

-R & B
-R & A
-B & G
-A & J

Register for Matching Events

A Family for Every Child offers two different matching events that families and caseworkers may partake in and benefit from. The first are Child Matching Events. During Child Matching Events, caseworkers may present the biographies of the waiting children on their caseload to home study approved families.

In turn, families may ask the caseworker questions about the child, and then submit their home study at the end of the event if they are interested. The second are Family

Matching Events. During Family Matching Events, families may present their biographies to caseworkers, allowing caseworkers to ask questions and connect families with children on their caseload that they feel would be a good match for the family.

Upcoming Child Matching Events:

[Thursday, December 5th](#) at 12pm PST

Keep checking the matching event pages to see additional children who will be participating in the event!

You may register for upcoming matching events and view past events all from our [Matching Events home page](#).

Volunteer Needs

Family Adoption Specialist: The Matching Assistance Program is looking for a Family Adoption Specialist to work alongside our Matching Assistance Families. It is the responsibility of the Family Adoption Specialist to read over a family's biography and provide suggestions for improvements, assist families with offsite submissions, provide support, and resources, and send family child recruitment updates as requested. Desired qualifications include:

§ Computer proficiency

§ The ability to work with minimal supervision while completing work in a timely manner

§ Excellent verbal and written skills with the ability to communicate across diverse populations

§ The ability to provide support, empathy and resources to adoptive families

§ A strong sense of customer service

Please contact the Matching Assistance Coordinator at nora.sharp@afamilyforeverychild.org to learn more about the position. Training will be provided. A commitment to at least 5 hours a week for 6 months is required.

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