

A Message from our President



Carolyn Bosa

Greetings Members and Friends,

I hope your year is off to a great start! You should have received a notice to save the date for our upcoming Let's Talk Adoption Virtual Conference on March 11th. We are celebrating 40 years of bringing informative and engaging interactive workshops and networking to the adoption community. And, this year is no different. Keynote speaker Debbie Riley will speak on "The Unspoken Trauma: Loss." Please see insert for more information. We hope you can join us.

We are so grateful for the community support during our holiday gift drive. With your generous donations of more than \$1,800.00 we were able to "surprise" over 95 foster care children in the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P). A special thanks to our Social Committee volunteers, Michelle Mulhern and Lorrie Chorazy, along with Stuart Turnbull, Lynn Riker, and Wendy Paladini for dedicating their time to purchase, wrap, and deliver those gifts for the children this holiday season. None of this could have happened without your support and kindness. Thank you!

We have a great lineup of activities this winter including our book discussions and social events. And, we have a great team of volunteers leading the way, but we could use more help. Any amount of time you can offer is appreciated. If you are interested in volunteering at an event, writing a story for the CPFA newsletter, or have a creative idea or special program you would like to lead, please send an email to info@cpfanej.org, or check out our website and social media (Facebook and Instagram). We would love to hear from you.

Thank you so much for your ongoing support. We wish you all the best in 2023!

Carolyn Bosa
CPFA President, Executive Committee

Mark Your Calendar!

Visit www.cpfanej.org for details.
Also follow us on Facebook and Instagram!

Saturday, March 11 | 9:00am – 1:00pm 40th Annual "Let's Talk Adoption"sm Conference – To Be Held Virtually!

Our very successful conference is celebrating 40 years! Join us virtually for workshops on pre- and post-adoptive issues. Visit our website for more information on sessions and to register.

Thursday, April 27 | 7:30pm – 9:00pm Adoption Book Group (in person and via Zoom)

Please join us for a lively and thought-provoking discussion on *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver. Email cpfanej.adoptionbookgroup@gmail.com with "CPFA Book Group Zoom" in the subject line, to participate. An email will be sent with info on the in-person location as well as the Zoom meeting link, password, and instructions on joining.

Friday, May 5 | 8:00pm – 9:30pm "Can We Talk?" (via Zoom)

A great way to connect with other adoptive parents to share thoughts, ideas, struggles, victories, and more – from the comfort of your home! Topic TBD. More information will be available on our website in the coming months.

Sunday, May 21 (tentative date) | 12:30pm Turtle Back Zoo

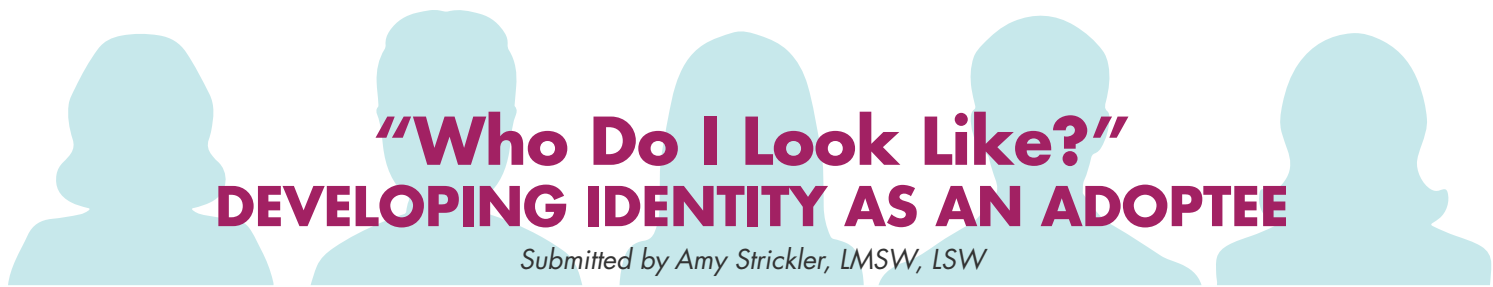
Join CPFA families for a fun time at Turtle Back Zoo in West Orange! Please visit our website in the coming weeks to confirm the date, details and to register.

New Members & Guests Welcome!

To learn more about the history of the organization, detailed information on upcoming events and locations, how you can become a member or volunteer, please visit our website or email info@cpfanej.org. Please do not contact any of the event locations for information or directions.

Mission Statement

CPFA is a non-profit organization in the State of New Jersey dedicated to the belief that every child deserves a family. CPFA is not an adoption agency, but a volunteer organization working to support those who wish to adopt, and to provide educational and networking resources to those who have adopted.



“Who Do I Look Like?” DEVELOPING IDENTITY AS AN ADOPTEE

Submitted by Amy Strickler, LMSW, LSW

The formation of identity is a process that begins at puberty and continues through young adulthood. It has been defined as “achieving a cohesive definition of self while individuating from parents or family” (Grotevant). During identity formation, individuals explore and make commitments to roles and ideals while negotiating the balance between autonomy and their relatedness within the family, with peers, and other social relationships. As part of this process, individuals consider information told to them by others regarding who they are, where their strengths and weaknesses lie, how to behave, etc. They also look to those around them with whom they can identify in both physical features and natural abilities and discern if that is someone they can emulate.

Identity formation is an important developmental task in which all individuals engage; however, there is added complexity for the adoptee. Adoptees know (or should know) that they have a family of origin that differs from their adoptive one. Nearly all adoptees have attributes that are different than their adoptive family. These may include different ethnic and cultural orientations, personalities, appearances, health constitution, and physical and cognitive abilities. These differences, along with unclear or little information about their first family, may complicate the process of identity development for adoptees. Unclear or unknown characteristics of their family of origin may result in identity confusion and a postponement of other identity work. Working through these challenges is important for an adoptee’s self esteem and overall wellbeing.

The identity development process is one of “simultaneous reflection and observation” in which an individual engages in critical judgments of himself and of society from multiple perspectives. Often missing for the adoptee to factor in as part of this process is a relationship with, or information about, their first family. Therefore, when grappling with identity, they are at a loss and uncertain as to whom or what to commit, as their adoptive families are their only history. While they may be attached and in a loving relationship with their adoptive family, something is “missing,” and as a result, their strive for autonomy or independent identity may be hindered or laden with conflict.

Recognizing this is a first step in helping your child who has been adopted meet the challenge of attaining self-identity. It is very beneficial to the process that adoptive parents share as much information as possible about their child’s biological family, including racial, ethnic and cultural factors that influence strengths and challenges. If nothing is known about the biological family, a parent may note the child’s features and talents and suggest that they may be those which they inherited. If feasible, conversations should include the option of search and reunion, revisiting it from time to time even if the child’s initial response is disinterest. If a mutual decision to search is made, it is best to work with a mental health professional. Search and reunion is multifaceted, and it is important to process expectations and to consider a range of outcomes. One needs to be sure they are emotionally prepared and to seriously consider appropriate timing as well as social and emotional impact on all family members.

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To contact a board or committee member, please email info@cpfanj.org



40th “Let’s Talk Adoption”sm Conference

Virtual via Zoom

Saturday, March 11th | 9:00am – 1:00pm

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
Debbie Riley, LCMFT

“*The Unspoken Trauma: Loss*”



Debbie Riley is the CEO and co-founder of the Center for Adoption Support and Education (C.A.S.E.). She is a nationally- and internationally-recognized adoption expert, trainer and author.

The conference topics include grief and loss; telling your child their difficult story; parenting a child of a different race; adolescence and emerging adulthood for LGBTQ adoptees; and trauma-informed school strategies and programs. Pre- and post-adoptive parents, foster parents, child welfare professionals, adoptees and kinship guardians will all benefit from attending and participating in these workshops!

Registration Fee: \$35 per person (\$40/couple); Student Fee \$20. Continuing Education Hours (CEHs) for NJ & PA Social Workers (maximum 3) provided by Rutgers University Office of Continuing Education. Processing fee of \$20 for CEHs.

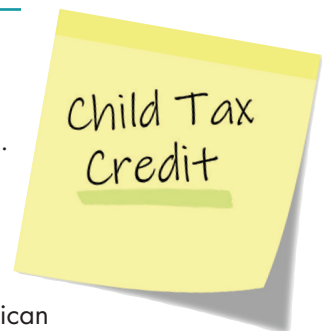
Coordinated by Concerned Persons for Adoption (CPFA) and co-sponsored by the Adoption Agency Council of New Jersey (AACNJ) and Rutgers University School of Social Work. Visit www.cpfanjanj.org for more information. Email questions to info@cpfanjanj.org.

2022 Adoption Tax Credit

For adoptions finalized in 2022, there is a federal adoption tax credit of up to \$14,890 per child. The 2022 adoption tax credit is not refundable, which means taxpayers can only use the credit if they have federal income tax liability.

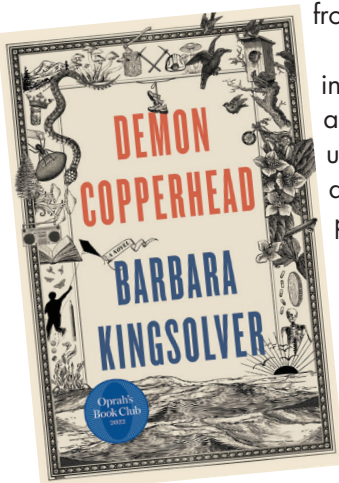
The credit applies one time *for each adopted child* and should be claimed when taxpayers file taxes for 2022.

For more details on the 2022 adoption tax credit, including eligibility, please visit the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) website at nacac.org/help/adoption-tax-credit/adoption-tax-credit-2022/



CPFA Book Group – April 27th

Reading the “featured” book is not required to participate in any of the CPFA Book Group discussions! You may want to simply join the lively discussion that typically goes beyond just the material in the book. The featured book for the upcoming discussion in April is the *NY Times* Bestseller, *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver. Below is an excerpt of the summary from www.goodreads.com.



“Set in the mountains of southern Appalachia, this is the story of a boy born to a teenaged single mother in a single-wide trailer, with no assets beyond his dead father’s good looks and copper-colored hair, a caustic wit, and a fierce talent for survival. In a plot that never pauses for breath, relayed in his own unsparring voice, he braves the modern perils of foster care, child labor, derelict schools, athletic success, addiction, disastrous loves, and crushing losses. Through all of it, he reckons with his own invisibility in a popular culture where even the superheroes have abandoned rural people in favor of cities.

Many generations ago, Charles Dickens wrote *David Copperfield* from his experience as a survivor of institutional poverty and its damages to children in his society. Dickens is not a prerequisite for readers of this novel, but he provided its inspiration.”

Pick up a copy and see what you think; then join us for a great discussion! For information on the upcoming books for group discussions in July & October, visit the 2023 Program and Events Calendar on our website.



“Volunteers don’t get paid, not because they’re worthless, but because they’re priceless!”



CPFA has a strong, core group of volunteers that serve on the Executive Committee and Board of Directors. There are also several who help behind the scenes with the “Let’s Talk Adoption” conference and other events. BUT, we still need more help! If you’ve been thinking about volunteering your time in 2023, please consider joining this great group of people. Any amount of time is helpful, and most of the assistance can be done from home, such as making phone calls, sending emails, or just brainstorming new ideas! To express your interest in volunteering, please send an email to info@cpfanej.org and let us know that you’re ready to help! *Thank you!*

Membership & Renewal Form PLEASE TEAR OFF AND RETURN WITH PAYMENT

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City, State, Zip: _____
 Telephone: _____
 Email: _____

Make Payable to: CPFA
Mail To: Miriam Frolow
 48 Oak Crest Rd., West Orange, NJ 07052

- Please Check off the Appropriate Box Below:**
- \$25 New/Renewing Membership & Newsletter
 - \$45 New/Renewing Membership & Newsletter for 2 years

Social events are free to all members & their families! | Membership dues are tax-deductible.

**CONCERNED
 PERSONS
 FOR
 ADOPTION**
CPFANJ.ORG

PO BOX 179
 WHIPPANY, NJ 07981

*“Every Child
 Deserves a Family”*

**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
 YOUR MEMBERSHIP?**

The expiration date of your membership is shown on your address label.

You can become a member or renew your membership by mail or by following the link on our website.

TO CHANGE YOUR MAILING ADDRESS, PLEASE CALL 973-243-2621 OR CONTACT US THROUGH OUR WEBSITE