

FRUA NorCal eNews

August, 2007

FRUA NorCal Information & Events

Monthly Message

The Birth Family Search seminar was extremely helpful to those in attendance, and the notes are shared below. The summer gathering had a small turnout, so lots of you must have been busy, but it was still a sunny, ice cream filled afternoon for those of us who were there at Coyote Point on July 21.

We hope to see you at a fall event. Meanwhile, please feel free to ask questions or share thoughts on the FRUA NorCal online group at Yahoo <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/fruanorcal/>. Email Valerie Beeman at valeriebeeman@hotmail.com to join the group.

Enjoy the rest of the summer!

Valerie Beeman
FRUA NorCal eNews Editor

Notes from Parent Education Seminar: Birth Family Searches

The parent education seminar held on July 21 in Belmont provided much information, a variety of opinions, and lots of "food for thought" about the topic of birth family searches. The panelists were: Roxane Baxter, FRUA Education Chair and adoptive mother to a daughter from Russia; Anna Sternad James, professional searcher, adoptive mother to a son from Ukraine (and herself adopted); and Angela Schmiede, FRUA NorCal Co-Chair and adoptive mother to four daughters from Ukraine. All three have completed birth family searches.

Here are some of the reasons why adoptive parents may wish to do a birth family search:

- Get photos, video, or audio recordings of birth family members
- Get photos or other information about the adopted child not provided at the time of adoption
- Get medical information not provided at the adoption about the birth family
- Confirm verbal information passed along at the time of adoption
- Confirm information on adoption papers (it may be more anecdotal than legally based)
- To have more information than just the adoption papers for when the adopted child is older
- Establish contact with siblings or grandparents who may have had a positive relationship with the child

All panelists stated that they have shared what is age appropriate with their child from their successful searches; as the child ages and matures, other information may be shared. Roxane Baxter incorporated much of the information she obtained from the birth family search into her daughter's Life book, which her daughter

frequently refers to. Other benefits of having new or corroborated information from a birth family search is that it may fill in gaps, correct a child's misperceptions or fantasies, and identify past trauma (which may be helpful for therapy).

Angela and Roxane both said there is a birth family search group on Yahoo that is a good source of information, called [birthparentcontact](#). Angela used Anna Sternad James and her searcher Ruslan for her children's searches. Costs can range from \$800 to \$2000 depending on the level of information desired and the travel required to reach birth families.

Several parents in attendance stated their desire to do a birth family search, and to not let the "trail" get too "cold" after adopting. Another reason stated was so they could reassure their child when the child is older that they did everything they could to get all the information available for when the child is ready to know about their birth family.

-Notes taken by Valerie Beeman

Update on Ukrainian Passport Issuance

The Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs has informed the Embassy that effective immediately Ukrainian passport issuance for adopted children will take a minimum of ten business days in addition to the required ten-day waiting period after the adoption has been finalized. Therefore, following the court decree that recognizes the American adoptive parents as the legal parents of the child or children being adopted, passport issuance will take a minimum of 20 additional days.

We realize this places a substantial hardship on U.S. parents, many of whom have already spent a good deal of time in Ukraine prior to the adoption. However, this new policy is based on Ukrainian law, and the U.S. Embassy cannot influence the issuance of individual passports in accordance with this policy. We urge Americans adopting in Ukraine to take this additional period of time into account when making their travel plans.

Sincerely,
Adoption Unit/Immigrant Visa Section
Consular Section
American Embassy
Kyiv, Ukraine
Tel: 38-044-4904422
Fax: 38-044-490-4570
Kyivadoptions@ state.gov
<http://kyiv.usembassy.gov/amcitadoptionseng.html>

Parents' Night Out Meetings

These are informal gatherings; people come whenever their schedule permits.
Cost: Free (if at dinner time, everyone pays for their own dinner).

Peninsula Parents' Night Out

Informal monthly gathering of Parents living on the Peninsula who have adopted or are waiting to adopt from Eastern Europe. Meetings are the second Thursday of each month.

Date: Thursday, August 9

Time: 7-9 pm

Where: Country Gourmet & Co. 1314 S Mary Ave (at the corner of Fremont, just a few blocks off of Hwy. 85) Sunnyvale

Contact: Mary Carlino mariana.carlino@sbcglobal.net or 408-261-2360 to reserve a spot!

Sacramento Parents' Night Out

FRUA-Sac PNO dinners are scheduled for the last Thursday of every other month. We alternate meetings between Sacramento and Roseville.

Marin Playgroup Event

An ongoing playgroup for Internationally adopted young children. Come join in the fun!

Lifebook Working Groups

If you are getting started on your child's life book or even just thinking about it, come to a Life book working group to get inspired, get some work done, have some munchies, and share information about putting a life book together.

Non-FRUA Information & Events

Parent Education Seminars

There are some good seminars offered by Parents Helping Parents in various cities throughout California. Go to the PHP web site for details; you can search for seminars by city and many of them are free: <http://www.php.com/include/events/>

Touched By Adoption Support Group in Santa Cruz

Adoptive Families, Adult Adoptees, Families Waiting to Adopt and Birth Parents meet monthly to connect in a safe, confidential setting. Join us 10:00 a.m. to noon on the last Saturday of every month at the Live Oak Family Resource Center, 1438 Capitola Road, Santa Cruz. There is no charge for our meeting. Childcare is available: call one week prior to arrange. For more information: call 866-219-1155 or email adoption@got.net. Next meeting: August 25th 10:00 a.m.

Hand In Hand

Hand in Hand is a support organization whose work is based on the principles of respect, listening, leadership development and the importance of interpersonal connections. They help parents and professionals gain perspective on their work and give them tools to build stronger connections within their families, in their work and in their communities. Visit their web site's schedule of events to see what teleseminars and classes are coming up in many different counties:

<http://www.handinhandparenting.org/schedule.html>

Parents Place

The Jewish Family and Children's Services offers classes for all families and serves San Francisco, the Peninsula, and Marin and Sonoma counties. Their summer schedule of classes is a pdf brochure (scroll down to page 2 to see the listings):

http://www.jfcs.org/Services/Children,_Youth,_and_Families/Parents_Place/Parents_Place_on_the_Peninsula/PP_Cal_Summer_2007_PA.pdf

Adoption Telecourses/Webinars

Thinking of Adopting offers recorded seminars and new seminars on topics adoptive families can face. Here's the link to the schedule:

http://www.thinkingofadopting.com/html/adoption_telecourses.html

FRUA NorCal Membership

Membership in the Northern California FRUA Chapter is \$35 per family/year. The benefits of membership include:

- Free or reduced admission to social events (approx. 2-4 per year)
- Free admission to Parent Education Meetings (approx. 3-5 per year)
- Quarterly FRUA (national) newsletter, Family Focus
- Semi-annual FRUA NorCal newsletter (sent as a pdf attachment to email)
- Monthly e-News
- Membership in the online FRUA NorCal group at Yahoo; send email to valeriebeeman@hotmail.com and ask to be subscribed
- Access to the NorCal Mentor Program, which matches pre-adoptive families with post adoptive families for support during the adoption process
- Monthly or every other month "Parent's Night Out" dinners in various locations

The FRUA NorCal Email Newsletter is a benefit of membership. If you are not a member, you will not receive this monthly email. For information on membership and to sign up, please go to our web site, www.frua.org/norcal. The national FRUA site also has membership forms, and you can also join or renew using PayPal: www.frua.org.

Check Out Our FRUA NorCal Web Site!

To keep abreast of upcoming events, please check our web site regularly. It is updated frequently with FRUA and non-FRUA events that may be of interest to you. www.frua.org/norcal. If you have paper mail to send to FRUA NorCal, please contact either Co-Chair for a mailing address.

FRUA chapters are comprised entirely of volunteers who donate their time, energy and talents.