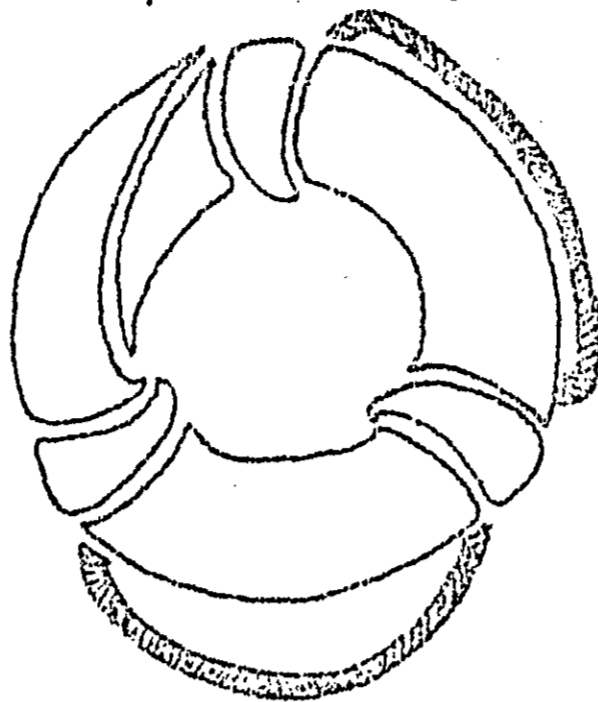


PITTSBURGH

ADOPTION



LIFELINE

THE LIFELINE

JULY 1979

Co-ordinators
Jean Vincent &
Barbara Santa

P.A.I.
P.O. Box 613
Rostraver Branch
Selle Vernon, PA
15012

MEETINGS

Regular monthly meetings are held the second Sunday of each month at 1:30 pm. Location is the Parkvale Savings Bank in the Horwin Shopping Center. Taking the turnpike, use Exit 7, Irwin. Go West on Rt. 30 almost 4 mi. to traffic light. Turn left, the bank is directly on the right. Coming from Pgh., take Rt. 30 East to the Shopping Center. Please feel free to bring your spouse or a friend for moral support.

Workshop following the meeting is for members only!!!

BOOK EXCHANGE

Our Book Exchange has been very useful to many of our members. However, many of the books are not being returned. Those who have books are asked again to please return them as soon as possible.

New Books

Search to Belong--

Carol Kaufmann

Lost and Found--

Betty Lifton

Doing Good---

Gaylin, Glasser, Marcus &
Rothman

LOOKING FOR SOMEONE

Publication has been stopped on this small magazine we were getting. We received a refund for the remaining issues we will not receive.

RE-NEWSALS

DATE _____

If your date is near, please send check to Jean Vincent
Box 52
Gibsonia, PA 15044

NATIONAL CONVENTION

As most of you know, Jean and I attended the First Convention in Washington, D.C. We were so pleased to meet Jean Paton, Susan Darke, Emma Vilardi, Donna Cullom, Nancy Sitterly, and others too numerous to mention here. We were also with those from Phila. and Linda Burgess again for a welcome reunion.

The Conference was unique for many because it was the first time they had been with others who shared those awful feelings we all know about. I noticed many Social Workers, Adoptees, and MANY Birth Parents. Representation by Adoptive Parents was quite small.

We are led to believe that the Adoptive Parent has little to do with this. I am sure they do. Where were the Adoptive Parent Groups??? Adoption is a Triangle. We must work together if the interest of the child is to be served.

Footprints in the sands of time are NOT made sitting down!!!

MEETING DATES

AUG. 12 SEPT. 9 OCT. 14

NOV. 11 DEC. 9

LOVE IN ABUNDANCE

Each of us is searching for the family we never knew. When one of our members finds a good reception, they come away feeling loved. It is a love that cannot be explained. For those of us who have had unhappy reunions, we must seek comfort from each other. Is there more? See page 2.



6-12-77

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Bringing Adoption Into Open

By PETER LED

Post-Gazette Staff Writer

She was 13 when she found out and for more than a year (it seemed like 10 years, she would later say) she kept the secret from her mother.

But it would have to come out sometime — and it did during one of those mother-teen-age daughter arguments.

"Maybe if you knew everything there was to know, you wouldn't get like this," the mother said.

"Maybe I know more than you think I know," the daughter replied. It was no throwaway line. The mother paused, startled. The daughter's secret came tumbling out. She knew she was adopted.

Fewer and fewer adopted children of today have to go through the shock of discovery that Jean Vincent, now a woman of 50, did almost 40 years ago.

The secrecy surrounding adoption has diminished. Adoptive parents are routinely advised not to keep their children's origins from them.

The thinking had been that the child should be spared the confusion and pain of having two fathers and two mothers.

But like Jean Vincent, the children inevitably found out, it seemed. For many, the discovery triggers a long and impassioned search.

"Everyone else has two parents," says Mrs. Vincent. "We have four — two real and two ghosts. Peace of mind comes only after the ghosts are replaced by the real people."

Mrs. Vincent, who lives in the North Hills, is co-director of Pittsburgh Adoption Lifeline, whose primary goal is to help adopted children who are now adults successfully complete that search. Group members also speak before adoptive parents' groups in the Pittsburgh area on the special problems and concerns adopted children face.

"Adopted children are unique and much harder to deal with," says Mrs. Vincent, who notes that the suicide rate among adopted teen-agers is high.

It's essential, she believes, that adopted children know from an early age they're adopted. "But that's not going to be the total answer."

For one thing, adopted children feel rejection more acutely, because they have been "rejected" by the people who gave them life.

"The child will wonder why his birthparents didn't keep him: 'If they didn't want me and that's what they think of me, maybe the same thing will happen with my adopted parents.'"

For some adopted children birthdays are horrible reminders of rejection.

Because of that feeling they may need more love "so an adopted mother almost has to give more," says Mrs. Vincent.

There are other issues. Sometimes the child is not accepted by other members of the family, such as aunts and uncles. Sometimes the child will want to know more about his background than even the parents know.

"My suggestion is to be open and talk about a problem. If you notice a child sulking, quarreling or doing anything differently, talk about it."

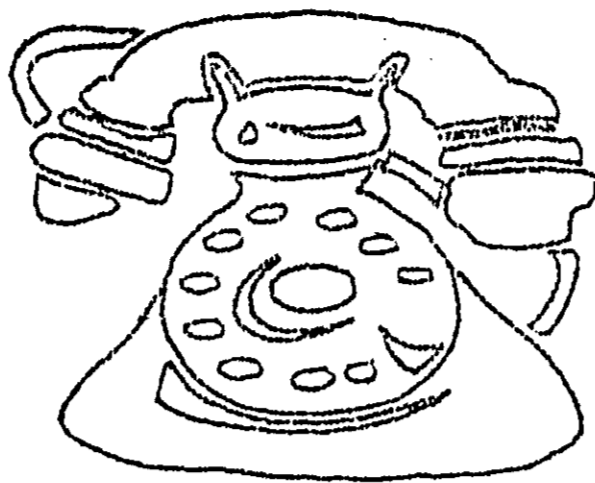
As a girl, Mrs. Vincent wondered why there were no baby pictures of her in the family album. Those were the Depression days, she was told, there was no money for pictures. But she noticed there were pictures of her brother, who was only a few years

She learned the real reason from her brother. He told her he had been in on the family decision to adopt a little girl. She was 3 at the time she joined the family.

(Continued on Page 19)

4

443-2762
OR 3370
JEAN



DIAL A PAL

929-5889
BARR

NEW PHONE

At her own expense, Jean has had a phone installed in her home for PAL use only. This number will be listed in the new phone books under Pittsburgh Adoption Lifeline. This will make it easier for new members to find us. And also for Jean when the family (Timmy) is expecting a call. The number to call is 443-3370.

CHAMPION

Congratulations are in order for Jean's son Tim. Jean could not attend June meeting because she and her husband went to see Tim in Phila. for the State Bowling Championships. Tim came home with the Title, a trophy, and also a Scholarship. Tim is 15 yrs. old. Roll on, Tim!!!

IN MEMORY OF

We regret the loss of one of our members. Mrs. Patricia Roche passed away at the age of 33. Patricia was a neighbor of mine, and had just found her sisters before Christmas. I don't believe she was able to meet them because of her lingering illness. Patty never told me she was ill. She was never one to complain really.

Pat leaves behind three sons and her husband Robert. My most sincere sympathy to each one.

2 Corinthians 5:4,6,8
For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord; we are confident I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

LOVE IN ABUNDANCE (cont.)

Many times we forget the great amount of guilt that each of us carries. The Adoptee feels guilty for wanting to search. The Birth Parent is sorry that things were not different. The Adoptive Parent wonders what they could have done wrong that we are not "satisfied". Until we can forgive ourselves, we cannot hope for others to forgive us. We can not forgive ourselves because we have not been forgiven. What a needless, vicious circle. How many of you are loved, forgiven, and able to forgive? Pick up your bibles and read Revelation 1:5.

Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.

ADOPTIVE PARENT GROUP-- FRANKLIN, PA.

Jean and Judy will be the guest speakers at a meeting on July 16 in Franklin, Pa. Any members living in the area are invited to attend. Venango County A.P. Group
First Presbyterian Church
Elk and Park Streets 7:30 pm

Check with Jean before going in case of extended gas shortage.

LOST AND FOUND

We are planning our own lost and found column. Anyone wishing to contribute may contact Barbara at the P.O. Box or by phone. Please be short. Remember that our newsletter is mailed to groups nearly all over the country. I am hoping for good participation.
929-5889

In the mail, Mr. Jaroth Sweatman, psychologist for Pgh. Guidance Inc., will come and speak to us. Keep it in mind. Will try for October!

Adoption

(Continued from Page 17)

The discovery at age 12, she said, pushed her to the brink of suicide. It came after her adopted father died. Her mother remarried not knowing that her daughter knew she was an adoptee.

When she was sent off to boarding school, "I felt they were trying to get rid of me. When I finally found out, if I could have done it, I would have committed suicide. I don't think adopted parents realize how deep children think and feel. All teenagers do, of course, but adopted children are unique."

Mrs. Vincent suggests that parents be open about their child's background as early as possible.

"Some talk to the children as little as infants, saying 'my adopted baby,' while kissing and hugging. If they grow with the knowledge, there's never going to be the shock."

Mrs. Vincent was curious about her mother (whom she finally met two years ago), but not at all about her father.

Her father, who eventually abandoned his family, was in the habit of beating his wife. The memory of that apparently etched itself in Mrs. Vincent's subconscious, she believes.

Pittsburgh Adoption Lifeline has helped about 150 people find their natural parents since it was formed two years ago.

The search is not universally lauded. Mrs. Vincent can remember the TV talk show host who asked of her: "How can you be so ungrateful to your adoptive parents?"

"That's heaping everything on a person who already feels guilt tremendously," she says.

"Many adoptees have guilt feelings just because they know they have people raising them who know and love them while (they are) looking for other parents."

In fact, it wasn't an unhappy adoptive life that promoted Mrs. Vincent's search. "It didn't change my feeling for my adopted family. I just had to discover who I was. I realized I was more like my adopted mother than my biological mother. What I found out was necessary. Now I'm a total human being for the first time in my life. I felt I could really handle things better."

The group's address is Pittsburgh Adoption Lifeline, Box 613, Rostraver Branch, Belle Vernon, Pa., 15012. The meetings allow an atmosphere of solidarity for many who have dealt with their adopted past in isolation.

"Most adoptees would never talk to anyone who was adopted. I thought it was unique to me. I thought my feelings were disgusting. I was having all these questions when I had these wonderful parents. I found out it wasn't just me."

