

ADOPTION COUNSELING & CONSULTATION SERVICES - ONE YEAR OLD!

Our first year has been most exciting, challenging and rewarding. Services have grown much more rapidly than were ever imagined when the idea for the agency generated.

In 1982 the following services have been provided by ACCS:

- * ADOPTIVE PARENTING CLASSES
- * ADOPTIVE PARENT DISCUSSION GROUPS
- * ADOPTTEENS - FOR YOUNG ADOPTTEES
- * REUNIFICATION & INTERMEDIARY ASSISTANCE
- * ADULT ADOPTTEES & BIRTHPARENTS SUPPORT GROUP
- * INDIVIDUAL & FAMILY COUNSELING
- * CONSULTATION/WORKSHOPS/SPEAKERS BUREAU
- * INFORMATION & REFERRAL
- * COURT ORDERED CUSTODY INVESTIGATION & ADOPTION STUDIES

ACCS SPEAKERS BUREAU

Adoptees, adoptive parents and birthparents have joined professional staff in developing a Speakers Bureau. The purpose is to develop an awareness of adoption issues for those directly involved in adoption and those professionals serving members of the adoption triad. Presentations have been made to parents' groups, classes, workshops and a variety of community organizations. Results have been enriching and heartwarming.

Reactions from some who have attended these programs include:

"Every single aspect of this session was beneficial, and the most important suggestion--recommend that those who attend bring tissues!!"

"...not only was informative and interesting, but...a comfortable reassuring atmosphere for someone...who 'fears' the stringent 'social worker interrogations' and possible denial of a child."

"Helped raise my sense of awareness, urgency and sensitivity toward the decision process for adoption."

"Most helpful was: "...the combination of how-to info, actually seeing the agency workers and the stories & exploration of emotions & feelings."; "...becoming more knowledgeable about adoption."; "...how to prepare to be an adoptive parent."

"Realization that problems are solveable & we would be working with helpful concerned people."

"Hit...home about feelings that most adoptees and birthmothers have....."

"We need more time than 5 weeks. There's so much to cover and too short a time....."

"Everything was very educational and I enjoyed every aspect."

* * * * *

If you know of a group or organization that would be interested in a presentation on adoption, please phone the ACCS office at 824-0381.

We feel strongly that the development of awareness of adoption issues is vital to healthy adoption experiences for everyone in the adoption triad. It is often simply unawareness of others that allows them to ask annoying and even embarrassing questions. It is often simple unawareness that causes our own discomforts.

Adoption can be a positive experience for everyone involved. Increasing your awareness of adoption issues can help make your adoption experience or that of others, a positive experience.

THE ADOPTION PICTURE IS CHANGING

It has become evident to many social workers that some traditional methods of adoption are not serving the best interest of those involved. Adoption programs are changing as agencies move to provide educational services to adoptive families both before and after their adoptions.

In November 1982, ACCS was invited to provide consultation and to present a workshop on pre and post adoption services for The Family Life Center in Weston, Connecticut.

The Family Life Center is an adoption agency and family service program that is looking at how adoption impacts upon the family system. The decision was made to acknowledge some issues that had previously been swept under the carpet: when and how to answer a child's questions about adoption; what to tell a child about birth-parents; confronting feelings surrounding infertility and its impact on the parent/child relationship; searching for birthrelatives, and much, much more.

These are emotionally charged issues. They are also very critical issues in the adoption experience. The Family Life Center of Weston, Conn. is making tremendous strides in successfully confronting these issues and we at ACCS are proud to have been a part of their program development.

SEARCHING - AN ISSUE IN CONTROVERSY

"In all of us there is a hunger,
narrow & deep, to know our heritage,
to know who we are and where we have
come from.
Without this enriching knowledge
there is a hollow yearning.
No matter what our attainments in life,
there is a vacuum,
an emptiness,
and a most disquieting loneliness."

--Alex Haley

Thirty-two individuals searching for birth relatives have sought guidance, support and/or intermediary assistance from ACCS since the program began in June of 1982.

In only five months 12 searches have culminated in the meeting of birthfamily members. All have been most rewarding and positive experiences.

The ages of those in active search have included adoptees 19 to 52 years of age, and birthparents--one a birthmother of 69!!!

We recognize that searching is a controversial issue. We consider the impact of the search on all whom it effects--the searcher and his or her family and the party being sought.

It is the sincere desire of those involved in the reunification assistance program that no party be hurt as the result of a search.

The first ACCS involved search was that of a brother for his sister. When completed, the brother stated with much emotion, "It's like I was 7/8th's a person and now I have the other 1/8th." For him there were no more gaping holes as the pieces of his life puzzle were now fitting in place. His caring, openness and love reaffirmed ACCS' motivation to assist other "7/8th's people" in becoming "whole."

Searching is to discover answers, not bury them.
Searching is to close gaps, not widen them.
Searching is to solidify relationships, not destroy them.
Searching is an emotionally bonding experience for those who search together...it strengthens relationships when done constructively, with care and with love.

BOOKS--BOOKS--BOOKS FOR LOAN

ACCS is developing an excellent lending library of adoption related books and literature. Donations of your no longer used books on adoption topics would be most appreciated. There is no charge for taking books on loan from the library.

Additionally, several key adoption related books are on hand at the ACCS office for purchase for gifts or personal use. Please call to make a time to look through the adoption literature ACCS has available. Call 824-0381.

A fairly extensive bibliography on adoption literature is also available, if you would care to order books to develop your own library.

* * * * *

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR 1983!!!

- * EVERY 2nd THURSDAY OF THE MONTH
Adoptive Parents' Discussion Meeting 7 - 9 p.m.
 - * EVERY 3rd THURSDAY OF THE MONTH
Adult Adoptees & Birthparents Meeting 7 - 9 p.m.
(Search & Support; adoptive parents-guests welcome)
 - * MONDAYS at 6 p.m.
Adoptees - for young adoptees
 - * FEBRUARY 19, 1983
Potential Adoptive Parents' Workshop 9a.m. - 4 p.m.
 - * FEBRUARY 28, 1983 (for 5 consecutive Mondays)
Adoptive Parenting Classes 7 - 9 p.m.
San Antonio College
- CALL ACCS - 824-0381 - for details & registration

* * * * *

ADOPTIVE PARENTS' DISCUSSION MEETINGS

Register now for 12 months of Adoptive Parents' Discussion Meetings. Regularly \$5/individual & \$7.50/couple per session, those registering for a full year by January 13, 1983, can do so for \$4/individual & \$6.50/couple per session.

I/we wish to register for all 12 of the 1983 meetings of the Adoptive Parents' Discussion Group. Meetings are held the 2nd Thursday of each month at the ACCS office at 1550 N.E. Loop 410, Room 134, San Antonio, Texas 78209, and give the opportunity for sharing with other adoptive parents, professionals, adoptees and birthparents.

Name(s)

Address City Zip

Home phone Work phone

Payment enclosed (checks made to "ACCS"): \$48/individual; \$78/couple for full year-1983. Must be received by January 13 meeting.

Suggestions for future programs or issues I/we would like to discuss or learn more about are:

