



Support. Education. Local Events.
for Adoptive Families



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The PARC newsletter is published quarterly.
Please direct questions and comments to
parcnewsletter@bethany.org

Bethany Christian Services is a nonprofit,
private social services agency with more
than 115 offices located in 36 states. In
addition, Bethany offers social services to
children and families in 15 countries.



BETHANY.
CHRISTIAN SERVICES

www.bethany.org

This program is funded in part by the State of Michigan.

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Happy Holidays!

It's the happiest time of the year! All around us, everyone's decking the halls, jingling bells, and roasting chestnuts. And the nights are silent and all that white stuff is the winter wonderland we've been dreaming of! ... apparently.

As adoptive parents, we understand this time of year can be overwhelming for our children. The holidays often remind our children of past hurts and lost loved ones. Our kids can feel anxiety over how they should behave and where they truly fit in their new family. And, of course, the hustle and bustle often leaves them (and us) overtired, overstimulated, and just plain cranky! Still, this season is a time to be thankful for what we have, spend time with our family and loved ones, and celebrate new things to come!

All of us at the Post Adoption Resource Center are thankful for YOU. We understand the unique struggles adoptive families face this time of year, and we want to extend to you our gratitude, support, and hope! The time you spend together as a family, the traditions you keep, and the memories you make help shape the person your child is becoming. Thank you for all you do, and we wish you the happiest of holidays!

Client Testimonials

*"Thanks so much for all the assistance, expertise,
and calm you've brought us. It was much appreciated!"*

"My wife and I have talked about it, and we really felt like we were left to 'fend for ourselves' so to speak once the adoption was final. It's nice to know there is someone out there that still cares."

"It was very good to verbalize strong points as well as weaknesses. That really helped to refocus on our goals as a family. It gave new energy for dealing with the weaknesses. Thank you for being there in our time of intense stress."

AVAILABLE SERVICES

Working with your adoptive family:

- Support of a PARC specialist in your home
- 24-hour crisis availability
- Short-term emergency intervention
- Family-centered plan
- List of supportive regional resources

Connecting you with community services:

- Liaison for adoptive families to other service providers
- One-on-one assistance accessing services
- Comprehensive resource guide

Getting you the information you need:

- Daily phone access
- Timely responses with information
- Connection to resources

Supporting your family:

- Monthly group experiences
- Quarterly training

Sharing even more:

- PARC website with recommended books/articles on adoption
- List of community resources
- Calendar of adoptive parents' events and trainings
- Adoptive family newsletter



Fun Facts

The song "Jingle Bells" was written by James Pierpont in 1857. It was originally titled "One Horse Open Sleigh" and was written for Thanksgiving.

Christmas did not become a federal holiday in the U.S. until June of 1970!

Beating the Winter Blues

The holidays are over, the days are short, and the weather is COLD! The gray skies can leave us feeling down, and the temperature forces us indoors. But there are ways to make our homes inviting and ways to keep our children (and us) engaged and smiling.

Try stringing some colorful lights around a window or two. Lighting them up in the evenings can help brighten your home and your spirit!

Get creative with a roll of masking tape. Make a hopscotch pattern or pretend balance beam for your child on the floor. Create the floor pattern for a dollhouse or castle and let your kids fill them with furniture or Legos.

Get some frozen bread dough. Once it is thawed, allow your child to mold it, braid it, turn it into a dog, whatever! Not only is it fun and entertaining, but baking bread makes your home smell warm and inviting and leaves you with a tasty treat.

Mixing cornstarch and water will make a goo that will captivate your child. This combination can act like a solid, but

flow like a liquid. Rest assured, this WILL make a mess; but cleanup is easy. Allow it to dry, and it returns to a powder that can be vacuumed or wiped right up.

Bring a little green into your home. It's pretty basic, but plants just bring life into a space. So go crazy and bring the outdoors in!

Building a Bond

Making arts and crafts together is a great way to form a lasting attachment with your child. Try making this wreath together to display your Christmas cards.

MATERIALS

- 42 spring clip clothes pins
- 2 green acrylic paints
- Wire hanger or sturdy wire
- 14 red & 28 green 9x6 mm pony beads
- Tie wire
- 1 yard of 2.75" red ribbon

TOOLS

- Small flat paintbrush
- Wire cutter
- Pliers

INSTRUCTIONS

Divide the clothes pins in half and paint 21 each with the two shades of green. Cut the hook off the hanger. Form an open circle and small ½' loop at one end to hang wreath, using pliers.

Alternate a bead with a clothes pin around the wire, alternating the two shades of green clothes pins as you go. Alternate the beads in the following pattern: red, green, green; red, green, green.

Hook the ends together or tie with thin wire. Tie bow. Wire bow over joining.

You can simplify the craft by only using 1 color of paint and all red beads.



Don't Just Have a Happy Holiday, Make it One!

by Kjirsten Boeve, MA, LLPC

ADJUST YOUR EXPECTATIONS

While we all want to make the holidays memorable and enjoyable for our children, adoptive parents often aim for perfection in their desire to make their adopted child feel special. Remember, you are only human! Don't sweat the small stuff, let go of perfect, and focus on the present.

SET PRIORITIES AND ELIMINATE THE "FLUFF"

School parties, church parties, cookie exchanges, dinner at Grandma's, dinner at Aunt Ruth's, pictures with Santa, caroling... and the list goes on and on. It is no wonder that the parents are stressed and the kids are overwhelmed. For children who have experienced trauma, too much stuff usually becomes too much to handle. Prioritize a few holiday activities that are important to your family and let the rest go. Odds are your child would probably prefer snuggling with you on the couch and looking at the twinkling lights then going to another loud and overwhelming event.

STICK TO YOUR DAILY SCHEDULE

The holidays often bring late nights followed by busy days. Sticking with your daily schedule can be difficult, but the routine is so important for your children. Doing so ensures that they have the proper amount of sleep, healthy food at regular times, and just the right amount of activities to fill

their day without leaving them overstimulated. This may take extra planning on your part when the children are home from school, but will be worth it in the end.

TAKE TIME TO HELP YOUR CHILD REMEMBER THEIR LOVED ONES

As adoptive parents, we often forget (or choose to ignore) the fact that our children have another family—but that does not mean our children forget. While it may be hard for us to understand, most adoptive children still love their biological family, even if a family member hurt them. Although the child wanted the hurtful behavior to stop or the family member to change, they likely did not want to lose their loved one. So, while you are busy focusing on family this holiday season, take time to acknowledge your child's grief and help him or her remember happy memories with their birthfamily.

INCORPORATE YOUR CHILD'S PAST INTO YOUR FAMILY'S PRESENT

Adoption has changed your family, so it makes sense to change the way you celebrate the holidays. Your adopted child probably had holiday traditions from their past that were important to them. Simply talking to your adopted child about what the holidays were like for them may help you come up with new ways to celebrate that acknowledge your child's past, honor the present, and make the future something to look forward to.



REMEMBER WHERE YOUR CHILD CAME FROM AND MEET THEM WHERE THEY ARE NOW

Many of our children come from hard pasts, and this leaves the way they interpret the world around them forever changed. Be mindful of how your child reacts to holiday stories. "You'd better not pout, you'd better not cry" can leave your child afraid that if they act unhappy, something bad will happen. Even the thought of having to "be good" for Santa can instill anxiety and fear. Be aware of these stories, and talk to your child about them.

TAKE CARE OF YOU

You won't be able to do any of the things listed here if you are tired, stressed, and overwhelmed yourself. Limit your own tasks and activities, pour some hot cocoa, reach out to friends and family for support, and take some time to rest and relax. That way you will truly be prepared to make this a happy holiday!

Holiday Past

The original ball lowered in Times Square on New Year's Eve back in 1907 was made of iron and wood and decorated with 100 light bulbs.

Holiday Present

The modern New Year's ball is made of Waterford crystal, covered with 696 light bulbs, 96 strobe lights, and 90 rotating pyramid mirrors.

upcoming events & training



All three PARCs have many family fun events planned for this winter, as well as support groups and trainings. Please check your PARC region's Facebook page, watch for monthly calendars, or give us a call to find out what is available near you.

PARC Region 2: Northern Michigan

Join us for winter fun tubing at multiple locations, parent's night out, family movie night, tax training with H&R Block, plus so much more!

231.995.0870 • jgullekson@bethany.org

[facebook.com/PostAdoptionResourceCenterOfNorthernMI](https://www.facebook.com/PostAdoptionResourceCenterOfNorthernMI)

PARC Region 3: Central Michigan

Ludington & Fremont families, watch for new daytime opportunities to meet with area families working to help children.

231.924.3390

[facebook.com/PostAdoptionResourceCenterCentralMichigan](https://www.facebook.com/PostAdoptionResourceCenterCentralMichigan)

PARC Region 4: Western Michigan

Watch for more information on the following family fun events throughout the region: The Salvation Army Kroc Center, Catch Air, Kangaroo Palace, Holland Aquatic Center, YMCA, Sherman Bowling Lanes, Pando Winter Sports Park, Muskegon Winter Sports Complex, and Frederik Meijer Gardens.

616.710.5120 • sirwin@bethany.org

www.facebook.com/PARCRegion4

TRAINING IN REGION 4: (ATIP) ADVANCED TRAUMA INFORMED PARENTING

Saturdays from 9:00 a.m.–noon on 1/9, 1/23, 2/6

Bethany Christian Services

901 Eastern Ave NE, Grand Rapids, MI

Speaker: Kim Poplaski BSW • Continental breakfast provided.



recommended reading

Jazzy's Quest

by Carrie Goldman & Juliet Bond, LCSW

Jazzy's Quest is a delightful addition to any early reader's library. The book begins with a fun, relatable story about the difficulties of fitting in and finding your place in the world through the eyes of an adopted heroine named Jasmine Armstrong. The book features a wonderful array of diverse characters, including many cultures, races, and capabilities. There are all different kinds of people in the world, and Jazzy's Quest aims to reflect them in a positive, inclusive light for all readers.



www.amazon.com/Jazzys-Quest-Adopted-Carrie-Goldman/dp/0989373282/



Fun Times at PARC Events



Bethany Christian Services is committed to supporting adoptive families through the lifelong, rewarding journey of adoption.

REGION 2

Bethany Christian Services
1055 Carriage Hill Dr, Ste 2
Traverse City, MI 49686
231.995.0870

www.bethany.org/traversesecurity

Charlevoix, Emmett, Cheboygan, Presque Isle, Antrim, Otsego, Montmorency, Alpena, Leelanau, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Crawford, Oscoda, Alcona, Manistee, Wexford, Missaukee, Roscommon, Ogemaw, and Iosco counties

REGION 3

Bethany Christian Services
6995 West 48th St
Fremont, MI 49412
231.924.3390

www.bethany.org/fremont

Mason, Lake, Osceola, Clare, Gladwin, Arenac, Oceana, Newaygo, Mecosta, Isabella, Midland, Bay, Montcalm, Gratiot, Saginaw, Ionia, Clinton, and Shiawassee counties

REGION 4

Bethany Christian Services
901 Eastern Ave NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616.224.7565

www.bethany.org/grandrapids

Allegan, Berrien, Cass, Kent, Muskegon, Ottawa, and Van Buren counties



postadoptionrc.org

other suggested websites: www.adoptivefamilies.com www.adoptioninstitute.org