

FOSTER & ADOPTIVE FAMILIES of LARIMER COUNTY

Monthly Newsletter

August 2018

Welcome to FAFLC

Foster and Adoptive Families of Larimer County is a family support organization that strengthens foster and adoptive families through:

- Publications
- Training and education
- Providing opportunities for networking among families
- Financial assistance for the special needs of children

We know you have busy schedules, but we hope you take the time to read these important tips, events, and articles.

Additionally, here are some local training classes that we are very excited about. Check them out!



Each year in Colorado, more than 500 children "age out" of the foster care system. These children enter adulthood without any sort of permanent connection—no childhood home to go to for Thanksgiving dinner, no one to go to for advice before a job interview, no one to call when they're having a bad day ... no support system at all.

The CHOICE program intervenes before these children "age out" of the system, by creating broader connections between youth and adults outside of the traditional adoption route. The program is built on the premise that once you make a connection with a foster child, you will be compelled to help in a more permanent way and help him or her transition into adulthood.

Come learn more about the ways you can get involved in the life of a youth in foster care. Through the CHOICE program, you can become a mentor and host for a foster youth, and create a permanent relationship with that youth that will dramatically improve their outcome.

If you attend the webinar version of this class, please note that we utilize telephone for audio and a powerpoint will be available through Ready Talk.

CHOICE Orientation Webinar

August 23, 6pm

Register at adoptex.org.



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Parents, Need A Date Night?

Fundango offers foster, adoptive, and kinship parents a night off while Kids At Heart hosts a 3-hour FUN themed event for kids from 0-18 years old. Cost is \$5 per child or \$15 per family.

RSVP: 970-223-1230 or director@kidsatheartfundango.org. Reservations required.

Everyone

Needs A

Role Model

Adapted from Larah Ritchie's
post on hearttoheartadopt.com



Everyone needs a role model. They teach us about ourselves and who we want to be. In children, they help to define what they feel is important and meaningful. Sometimes children compare themselves to adults they admire, and when they believe that they share characteristics, it can help them to believe in themselves, teach them that they are okay just the way they are, and provide an important kinship.

Role models can help teach:

Character – helping define what we admire and value.

Possibilities – realizing we can do things we may not have thought possible and which inspire us to keep trying and hoping.

Resilience – overcoming life's challenges. This helps us think we, too, can overcome obstacles.

Goals – achieving things that we wouldn't have been able to do if we didn't have a role model to inspire us!

Role models who are also adoptees are especially important for adopted children. Adoption is a different experience that is not shared with everyone. It can affect a child's self-esteem and we know that during certain times of their lives, children may feel adoption somehow makes them less valuable. Adopted role models help them to realize that there are millions of adoptees and that the majority grow up to be happy and successful.

A great example is Washington D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams. His is a long and erratic journey that ultimately led him to great things at our nation's capital, but it wasn't an easy path. While attending Santa Clara University in California, he became his sophomore class president and a Vietnam War protestor, but left school before graduating due to poor academic performance. From there, he joined the Air Force, which sent him to prep school instead of the coveted Air Force Academy because of his low grades. He worked his way up to being accepted at the Academy, but instead left the Air Force as a conscientious objector with an honorable discharge. He then gave piano and art classes to blind children and counseled Vietnam veterans before going back to school at Yale University. Once there, he left school once again, this time to pursue a map business that would eventually fail. He went back to Yale and earned his Bachelor's in Political Science, graduating magna cum laude. He went on to receive his J.D. at Harvard Law, as well as a Master of Public Policy. He eventually became the Chief Financial Officer of Washington DC, where he led them to not only break even, but achieve a surplus in their budget within two years. He was elected for two terms as the mayor of

the Washington DC from 1999 to 2007, and is now the Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director of the Federal City Council. While not everyone can identify with the specifics of his unique story, we can all admire his perseverance and willingness to work hard and not give up. Children can be empowered by learning how he incorporated his identity as an adoptee with the successful person he is today.

Because of the way adoption is portrayed in literature, the media, and Hollywood, children are likely to be unaware of how common it is for adoptees to grow up as successful, "normal" adults. Strive to surround them with that message. We can educate the world about the overwhelming success of adoptees. We can let EVERYONE know that there are many adoptees—some famous, some not—who can be role models for all!

Did you know that these successful people are all adoptees?

Sarah McLachlan – a musician, songwriter, performer and winner of two Grammy Awards. She and her two older brothers were adopted.

Edward Albee -Playwright

John J. Audubon – Naturalist

Surya Bonaly – Olympic Figure Skater

Peter and Kitty Carruthers – Olympic Skaters

Christina Crawford – Author

Daunte Culpepper – football players, Minnesota Vikings

Faith Daniels – TV News Personality

Eric Dickerson – Pro Football Player

Melissa Gilbert – Actor

Scott Hamilton – Olympic Skater

Faith Hill – Singer

Steve Jobs – Founder, Apple Computer

Art Linkletter – TV Personality

Charlotte Anne Lopez – Miss Teen USA

Greg Louganis – Olympic Diver

James Michener – Author

Tom Monaghan – Founder, Domino's Pizza

Dan O'Brien – Olympic Gold Medalist

Jim Palmer – Pro Baseball Player

Dave Thomas – Founder, Wendy's



Old Fashioned Corn Roast Festival

*August 24 -August 25
Downtown Loveland
4th Street & Lincoln
Loveland, CO
Cost: Free*

Put on by the Loveland Chamber of Commerce, the Old-Fashioned Corn Festival presents an exciting mix of music, shopping, fun festival food and several corn-related activities including the kick-off corn shucking contest, corn eating contests, corn recipe contests and the Corn Roast parade. Not to mention all the delicious boiled and roasted corn that you can eat!

Watch here for more details coming soon! Loveland.org/TheCornRoastFestival

Local Support Groups

Boulder | Boulder Valley Christian Church

Group Name: Adoption, Foster & Orphan Care

Contact: Cathy at cathy@bvchristian.org

Broomfield | Discovery Christian Church

Group Name: Adoption and Foster Care Support Ministry

Meeting: Last Sunday, 2:30- 4:30 pm

Contact: Bonnie Robertson at bonnie.robertson02@yahoo.com

Please RSVP to Bonnie and let her know your childcare needs

Denver | Various Support Groups

Contact: Deb Marshall at 303.204.7515 or dmarsal@earthlink.net

Englewood | AllHealth Network - Inverness Office

Group Name: Adoptee Relationship Techniques for Teens (ARTT)

Meeting: Every Monday, 5-6pm

Helping teens who were adopted effectively communicate their needs and have better relationships. Open to teens ages 13 - 18.

Contact: Call (303) 730-8858 about this group

Fort Collins | Faith Evangelical Free Church

Group Name: Foster Care/Adoption Support Group

Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6pm in the café

Contact: Jodi Larson at 970.226.0100 or msquared2@comcast.net

Fort Collins | Timberline Church

Group Name: Foster Care/Adoption Support Group - Welcome Child

Meetings: 2nd Sunday of the month, 6-7:30pm

Contact: Wayne and Michele Sanner at 970.481.5749 or mlsanner@gmail.com

Fort Collins | Poudre School District Parents of Special Needs Kids

<https://www.meetup.com/Poudre-School-District-Parents-of-Special-Needs-Kids/>

Greeley | Christ Community Church

Group Name: Forever Families

Meetings: Check calendar at <http://cccgreeley.org>

Longmont | Life Bridge Christian Church, Room 122/124

Group Name: Foster Care/Adoption Support Group

Meetings: Check calendar at <http://lbcc.org/events>

Online | Free therapist-led support group and webinar

Meeting: See website for dates and times at attachmentcenteroftherockies.com

Contact: Deb at 970-328-5630 or

deb@attachmentcenteroftherockies.com

Online | Adoptive Families Circle Online Community

http://www.adoptivefamiliescircle.com/groups/group/Colorado_Adoptive_Families1/



Bingo Volunteer Lineup

FAFLC has been doing bingo as a fundraiser for over 23 years!

Bingo is always in need of more volunteers—general volunteers as well as callers—and training is available. Youth have to be 14 years old to volunteer.

Go to the FAFLC website and sign up through our sign-up genius. Make sure to find a replacement if you can't make your scheduled time!

Bingo is FAFLC's major fundraiser. This is a great, easy way to get volunteer hours.



- Meet other Youth
- Learn about Customer Service and Handling Money
- Use Bingo as a community service for school if needed
- For the adults it's an opportunity to meet other foster or adoptive parents

**Every Sunday night
5:30—9:30pm**

Loveland Opera Theatre presents

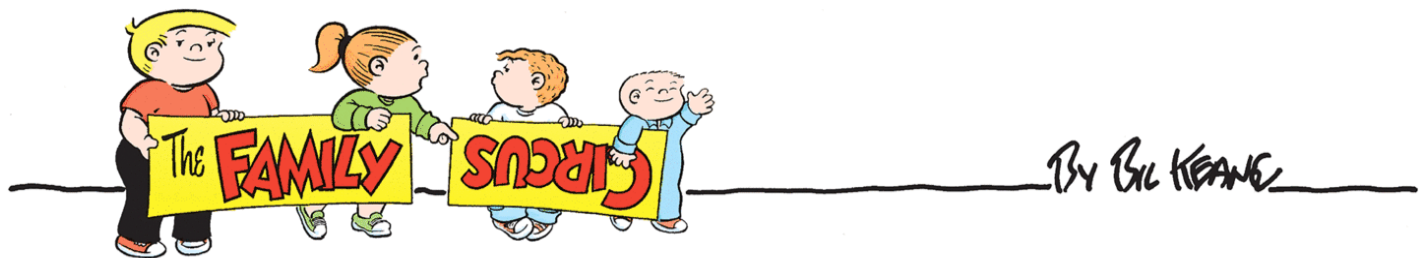
MAMMA MIA!

"You can dance; you can jive, having the time of your life!"

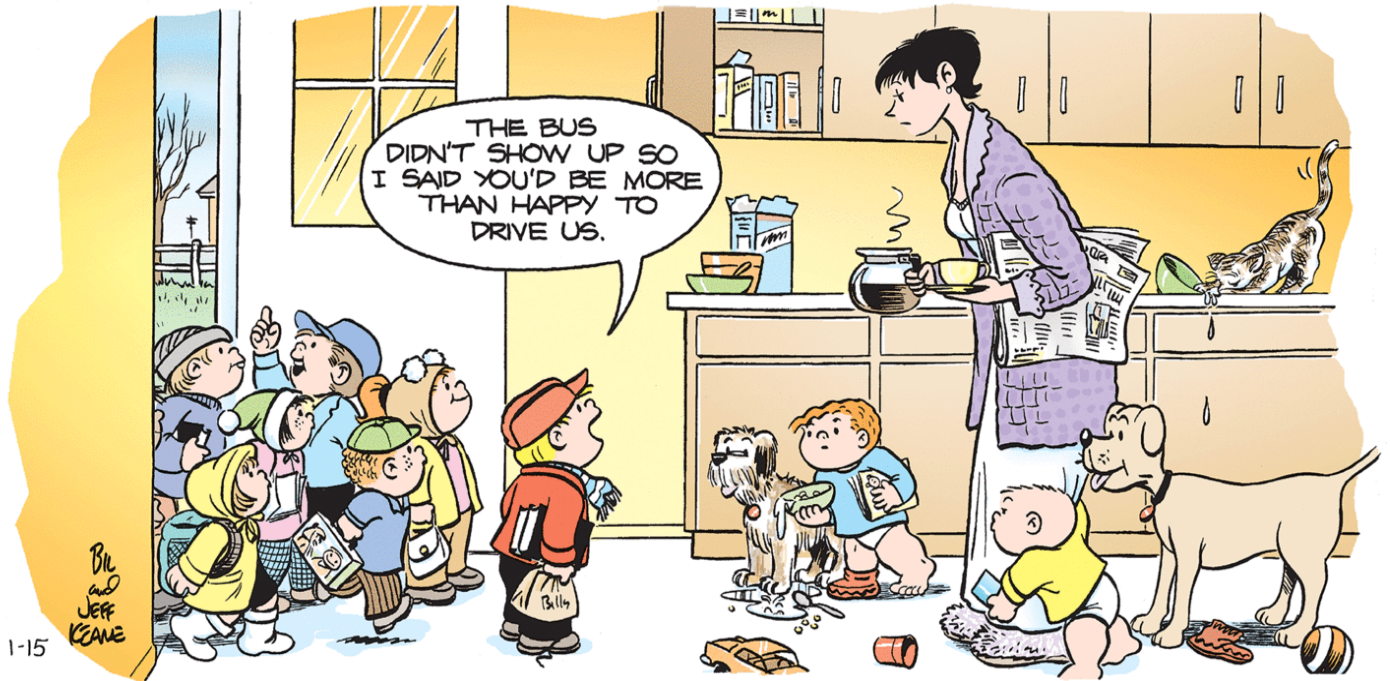
Mamma Mia in Concert
August 19, 5:30pm - 6:30pm
Foote Lagoon Amphitheater
500 E. 3rd St, Loveland
970-962-2770
Cost: Free

Put Loveland Opera Theatre on your calendar for August, and come enjoy the fun, sparkling music of ABBA as presented by Loveland Opera Theatre singers. The cast of wonderful Colorado singers includes Belle Weathers, Michael Foerster, Alex Young, Trevor Valdez, Kyle Griffen, Rob Hoch, Margaret Siegrist and Mira Madorsky. Choreography by Sara Wilhelm, and accompanied by Paul Falk.

More information: visitlovelandco.org/event/mamma-mia-in-concert



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1-15

Reminders for Volunteers at the *Little House*

- Don't forget to get the code for the doors prior to going to the Little House
- Sign in on the sheet inside the Little House or in the back warehouse regardless of the reason for being there
- Do not put items of any kind in the "Model T" shed
- Pay close attention to the bins and how they are labeled when sorting items. Watch sizes and TAKE YOUR TIME!!!
- When trying on clothes or looking at items be sure to return them the way they were found or better. This means folding the items and replacing them on the shelf they were found on—NOT THE FLOOR! Leave the buildings picked up. Many volunteers spend hours sorting, hanging up, and cleaning the buildings.
- Use the appropriate hanger for the item—don't use adult hangers for little clothes.
- If you have to drop off items please put them toward the back of the warehouse where there is empty space and not right inside the doorway. DO NOT LEAVE ITEMS OUTSIDE—IT DOES RAIN AND SNOW IN COLORADO!
- Be sure to turn the lights off and chain up the gate when leaving—utilities are paid by FAFLC

Little House assistants—please call (970) 481-7993 if you see anything questionable at the Little House.

Book Corner



Rebecca's Journey Home by Brynn Olenberg Sugarman and illustrated by Michelle Shapiro

The story of a Jewish family with two sons that is waiting to adopt a little girl from China. Great choice to read to kids who are waiting for a sibling through international adoption.

The ONE Thing TO Say in Any Situation, Part 2

From Parenting and Imperfection: a guest writer series at 5 Kids Is a Lot of Kids

Carrie's Story

A couple of weeks ago I connected with a social media personality who goes by the name of Autism With a Side of Fries.

Every now and again she posts thought-provoking questions for her readers to consider. I never answer them, partly because my thoughts don't like to be provoked—they like to stay safely tucked away in my little head mulling over high-level ideas like which flavor of cake is better: vanilla or marble swirl.

But I also don't answer because it's really hard for me to answer a big important question in that teeny comment box Facebook provides.

On Saturday morning, I saw this on Facebook:

"So imagine this. A parent sits down next to you and says they just found that their kid has autism. What would you tell this New to Club Spectrum member?"

Huh, I thought to myself. What would I say?

Because of my book, I do have the opportunity to talk to a lot of parents with newly-diagnosed kiddos. My first instinct is to console, to soothe. *Oh, I am so sorry to hear that!*

But then it occurred to me how insulting that reaction is to the blue-eyed boy standing right next to me. It's like saying, "Listen, I know I pretend to really like you and I tell you autism is all sorts of cool, but it isn't. And when I hear someone else has it I feel bad for them."

So I stopped doing that.

My second instinct is to start blabbing my fool head off about a bunch of random, disconnected ideas:

"Are you doing sign language how about ABA a lot of my friends love ABA maybe you should try ABA I hear good things about hyperbaric chambers the gluten-free diet is supposed to help look up ABA!"

Meanwhile, I don't really know what ABA is, we don't own a hyperbaric chamber, and every Saturday Jack eats gluten-full pancakes like it's his job.

So, I stopped doing that too.

I thought about Autism With a Side of Fries' question. But instead of concentrating on a good answer, my mind kept darting back to a late-summer memory.

It was about a week before school started, and I had taken Joey and Charlie shopping for new sneakers. On the way home, we stopped at TGI Friday's for lunch.

From the moment we sat down, we could hear a little boy shrieking and banging and crying from two tables away. His voice was shrill. Over and over his mother carried him out to the bench in the vestibule with a weary expression on her face. Through the glass doors I watched him relax into her shoulder, only to stiffen and screech again once they returned to the table.

I know tantrums; with five kids, I figure Joe and I have lived through at least 9,434 of them.

But there is a difference between *where are my chicken fingers?* and *the world hurts it's too bright and too loud and too salty and too itchy and too much too much too much.*

Because if Joe and I have lived through 9,434, probably 8,922 of them have been thrown by Jack. And oh, I don't

know, maybe 3,156 of them were—and continue to be—in restaurants.

Listening to the little boy shriek reminded me that before there was kale, there were upturned dinner plates and chicken on the floor and lots and lots of screaming. Before there was sleep there were long, wakeful nights—nights when I could neither soothe the cranky infant nor silence the nagging pit in my stomach.

Sitting with Joey and Charlie in the darkened TGI Friday's, I thought about all the things I wished someone had told me about autism, back when two-year old Jack was diagnosed.

I wish someone had told me that yes, he would start to talk. And yes, we would teach him not to bolt out the door like an inmate escaping prison. And yes, eventually he would sleep through the night.

But how the old problems are simply replaced with new ones: instead of *he doesn't play with other kids*, we have *why won't he stop asking all the girls in his class how many radios they have?* Yes, Jack eats kale, but now he thinks we should eat kale with every single meal.

I wish someone had warned me that when Jack was in second grade, he would lock himself in the bathroom off the kitchen at 4:00 every day and sit and scream in gastrointestinal agony. How I would go in to try to help, only to discover that in his distress, he had smeared the walls and floor and sink with excrement.

How every day at 4:00 I wanted to open the front door, step outside, walk down our long driveway, and never come back.

But I didn't. Because I came to terms with a lone truth: only I can do this. Only I can be this boy's mother and ease the stomach cramps and wipe up the mess without shaming him.

And every day since, I feel the tiniest bit more confident that *I can* do it. *I am* doing it.

I wish someone had told me how over the years, Jack's *special needs* label would come to mean nothing more than that he is special. And he needs me.

It would have been nice to hear someone say that one day I would adore every single thing about my Jack-a-boo: his fleeting smile, his one-armed hugs, his robotic voice. His autism.

I wanted to say all of this to the mom in TGI Friday's last summer. I wanted to tell her I know how she feels and it will get better and tantrums are the worst. I wanted to tell her I am rooting for her.

I put my napkin down and walked over to their table. The little boy was calmer, his small face streaked with tears and ketchup.

But I didn't say any of it. I didn't bring up ABA or pretzels without gluten or eye contact or spectrum disorder. I simply stood awkwardly at the end of their table and asked, "How are you?"

As I pulled into my driveway on Saturday remembering our summer lunch, I decided that's how I would answer Autism With A Side of Fries' thought-provoking question. In fact, it's what I will say from now on to any mother or father or grandmother or sister or uncle who tells me someone they love has been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

How are you?

Carrie Cariello is a fellow mama of five and the author of *What Color is Monday? How Autism Changed One Family for the Better*.



Carrie lives in Southern New Hampshire with her husband, Joe, and their five children. She is a regular contributor to *Autism Spectrum News* and has been published in several local parenting

magazines. She has a Master's in Public Administration from Rockefeller College and an MBA from Canisius College in New York. At best estimate, she and Joe have changed roughly 16,425 diapers.

You can find Carrie at her blog, on Facebook and on Twitter. Carrie's story first appeared on her blog as "What I Wish Someone Had Told Me About Autism."

Read more of Beth's posts about raising biological and adopted kids at bethwoolsey.com

