

Post-Adoption Support

The staff at Catholic Charities understands that adoption is a lifelong process and an intergenerational journey. They are here to help serve all members of the adoption triad – adoptees, birthparents and siblings, and adoptive families – by providing comprehensive information, ongoing emotional support, and assistance with Search and Reunion.

Through their Post Adoption Services, they help with family and parent/child issues that may develop over time, and provide resources for anyone who has been touched by adoption.

SEARCH AND REUNION

An increasing number of adult adoptees and birthparents are coming to Catholic Charities searching for information about their birthparents or their adult children. Within the confines of the law and from its records, we can:

- provide Non-Identifying Information: A summary of your birthparents background. Your adoptive parents should have this information.
- obtain Original Birth Certificates for those born in Kansas
- provide Identifying Information: Names, social and medical background as well as legal documents found in the original Court Petition.
- conduct a Search/Reunion: Locate birth families; act as intermediary between adoptee and birth family in arranging phone calls, or face to face meetings. Provide counseling for all members of the adoption triad: adoptee, birth family and adoptive parents.

A compelling need-to-know is the usual reason for someone to undertake this difficult and often frustrating search process. Self-identity and finding one's roots are uppermost in searchers' minds.

When an adoptee or birth parent makes the decision to search, one can only hope to find long awaited answers to life-long questions. For the adoptee, questions of "Who do I look like?" and "Where did my abilities and my talents come from?" can be frustrating and lonely. Adult adoptees, in particular, have many questions regarding health issues. Current medical background information can be crucial for not only the adoptee but also for their children. The reunion process offers the opportunity for the adopted adult to know first hand about the circumstances that led to their adoption and to have information about their family of origin.

For the birth parent, they have questions of whether their child is okay, has the child had a good life and is the child happy. For birth parents to know about what happened to the child they parted with all those years before and to be able to explain their actions can go a long way to healing the wounds left by the experience. Whatever the degree of contact, even if only short lived, the majority of people feel a sense of well-being and ability to move on and make other decisions in their life.

Adoptive families can often feel left out of the reunion process. It may have stirred up a lot of feelings including a fear of losing the son or daughter they have raised and loved. For most adopted adults, these are important relationships, which they do not want to jeopardize. Reassuring their adoptive families, including them and being open and honest can help them to feel more at ease with the reunion. The bonds formed by years of love and proximity are extremely durable and are often strengthened further by a reunion.

It is impossible to predict the outcome of a reunion or how it will develop. Each situation is unique. It is a coming together of strangers who may have a deep and intimate bond formed in a previous relationship. The birth mother is likely to have a very vivid memory of that relationship and the feelings she experienced at the time. The adopted adult is likely to have a strong need to know what happened in those early days of his or her life. While the birth father may not have had the same level of involvement with the baby, he may also have strong feelings and memories from that time.

Often, both the adoptee and birth parent feel that a piece is missing. Search and reunion can help fill that void and make them complete. As a result of searching, some adoptees and birth parents will develop a life long friendship. For others, answers to questions and peace of mind will be achieved.

If you are interested in finding out more about connecting with your birthparents, or your adult children, contact Lori Titsworth at ltitsworth@catholiccharitiesswks.org or by phone at 620-792-1393.