

# AEA 2017

Adoption Exchange Association

## BI-ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Caesars Palace | Las Vegas, NV  
May 17-19, 2017



MAY 17-18

### National Adoption Conference

Expanding knowledge of best practices and connecting adoption professionals with their peers.

MAY 19

and introducing

### Breaking Down Barriers to Adoption

A One-of-a-kind National Match event for Child and Family Recruiters



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Conference Registration: **\$450**  
Members save **\$100**

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# AEA NATIONAL ADOPTION CONFERENCE

## May 17 – 19, 2017

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### SESSION PREVIEW

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#### **WORKSHOPS:**

**Wednesday May 17, 2017 (10:15 am - 11:30 am)**

##### **Recruitment Track:**

##### **Reverse Teen Matching Event**

**Presenter:** Ja'Neen Jones at Three Rivers Adoption Council

Do you struggle with finding homes for older children? Are you tired of the same old matching events, if so try the Reverse Teen Matching Event. The Reverse Teen Matching Event is an unique and engaging way for teens to be proactive in finding their forever families. Traditional matching events host approved families looking at available children. However, Three Rivers Adoption Council (TRAC) Reverse Matching events brings teens together to look for available families. This creative events allows foster care youth to have a true voice in their permanency.

##### **Retention Track:**

##### **Exploring Further Life In Limbo**

**Presenter:** Chauncey Strong, Trainer and Consultant

Exploring Further Life in Limbo: This workshop is a follow-up discussion from the morning interactive session Life in Limbo: A Role Play About Life In Foster Care. The objectives of this workshop is to discuss strategies that successfully address sibling issues including effective recruitment for sibling groups and to explore the importance of birth family connections even after an adoption is finalized.

##### **Post-Permanency Track:**

##### **Building an Adoption Aware Community**

**Presenter:** Teresa Hess at Families First Network

This workshop will focus on engagement and tools for training community members and providers about adoption and trauma history. During the workshop participants will learn how

to communicate to and with service providers about the needs of children in care and post adoption. The material will review how child welfare professionals can reach out to medical providers, therapists, education providers, and the general public, in order to form a community who is adoption aware.

### **Wednesday May 17, 2017 (1:15 pm – 2:30 pm)**

#### **Recruitment Track:**

##### **Mentoring Youth in Care: A unique Approach; A positive connection**

**Presenter:** David White at Fostering Great Ideas

Adults who shy away from fostering or adopting can become Mentors. Mentor programs specific for youth in foster care are hard to find in many communities. Why is this so, and do we want to change the status quo? We explore the opportunity and discuss how quality mentor programs provide long-term care for our youth.

#### **Retention Track:**

##### **Beyond Recruitment**

**Presenter:** Jill Marshall May at NRCDR AdoptUSKids and Mary Boo at AdoptUSKids

Child welfare systems often struggle to recruit and retain enough foster and adoptive families for children in care. Actively meeting a family's needs increases their ability to address each child's unique needs while also strengthening their relationship with your child welfare system. We will share strategies to develop, support, and retain current and prospective families that include the use of data, community partnerships, customer service approaches, and involve the voices of youth and resource families.

#### **Post-Permanency Track:**

##### **Making of a Man: Raising African American Youth in Foster Care**

**Presenter:** Brandi Hill and Lisa Robertson at Prince George's County Department of Social Services in Maryland

In our current political and social climate, racist acts in the United States have become commonplace. This is a contributing factor to the already difficult task of parenting teens. Child welfare professionals and foster parents are faced with the responsibility of preparing young African American males for the stigma and the social perceptions they are likely to encounter; while preserving their sense of self-worth, dignity and respect. This workshop will explore the impact of these racial misconceptions on the youth we serve. Participants will identify and discuss strategies for raising emotionally healthy African American youth.

### **Wednesday May 17, 2017 (2:45 pm – 4:00 pm)**

#### **Recruitment Track:**

##### **Using Social Media to Recruit, Develop and Support Resource Families**

**Presenter:** Pat Rhoads at AdoptUSKids and Tracy Serdjenian at NRCDR at AdoptUSKids

Social media presents the child welfare field with exciting opportunities for recruiting, developing, and supporting resource families, while also raising questions and challenges. We'll talk about leveraging free tools already available to you to increase your effectiveness in social media, offer ways to strengthen responsiveness to current and potential resource families, and

explore systems-level considerations (for instance, creating social media policies and preparing resource families). The workshop will include time for Q&A and discussion.

**Retention Track:**

**Rural Recruitment and Retention**

**Presenter:** Heather Simmons and Michelle Colburn at Lund

We are facing more and more challenges with recruiting and retaining foster families through the US. Vermont has been utilizing many different techniques which has allowed us to grow our pool of families and now is the time to share with others. Some of the techniques we will talk about are Community Forums, Table Talks and Market Research to find target audiences. You will learn about targeted, general and focused recruitment strategies.

**Post-Permanency Track:**

**Integration of Child Welfare, Behavioral Health and Physical Health**

**Presenter:** Neiko Shea at Sunshine Health and Toby Pina at Cenpatico Behavioral Health

This workshop will present an innovative Florida Medicaid Specialty Health Plan that provides a trauma-informed model that successfully integrates physical health, behavioral health, and Child welfare in order to support the unique needs of children in care and those who have been adopted through the foster care system. Outcome data and successes will be presented by Sunshine Health, the lead Health Plan, and its partners, Cenpatico Behavioral Health and Community Based Care Integrated Health.

**Post-Permanency Track:**

**Challenges Associated with Engaging Adoptive Families in Preventative Services**

**Presenter:** Leslie Cohen and John Webb at Spaulding

The QIC-AG has developed a Permanency Continuum Framework built on the premise that children in adoptive/guardianship families fare better when they are prepared and supported to address issues as they arise, before escalating into crisis. However, engaging families who are not seeking support can be challenging. Hear how NJ and IL are finding creative ways to provide preventative services to families of pre-teens who have not initiated a service request.

**Thursday May 18, 2017 (10:00 am – 11:15 am)**

**Recruitment Track:**

**Been There, Done That: Hiring Foster Care Alumni**

**Presenter:** Sara Blomeling DeRoo and Kimberly Offutt at Operation Forever Family

Operation Forever Family has created a highly successful recruitment model with former foster youth as their lead recruiters. The use of this model, along with other innovations has led to 15/20 youth in their research based program, exiting the residential treatment system and brought them into loving adoptive and foster families. Presenters will share the innovative model and lessons learned along with the research behind it.

**Retention Track:**

**Moving to Permanency in Foster Care**

**Presenter:** Mark Lacava at Spence-Chapin

Despite tremendous efforts, many foster care agencies lack the capacity to effectively intervene, treat, and transition children in foster care ages five and up with complex behavioral challenges to permanent families. This workshop reviews Spence-Chapin's innovative approach to help NYC children living in foster care transition home or adoption. We'll review how Spence-Chapin provides case management, comprehensive evidence-based therapy, and engages birth and foster families for the most complex cases.

**Post-Permanency Track:**

**TBRI Caregiver Training and Support**

**Presenter:** Jill Crewes and Amanda Purvis at The Adoption Exchange

This workshop will provide an orientation to Trust Based Relational Intervention®. TBRI® is a parenting and intervention model developed by Dr. Karyn Purvis and Dr. David Cross at the TCU Institute of Child Development and is based on a solid foundation of neuropsychological theory and research, tempered by humanitarian principles. It is a family-based intervention that is designed for children who have experienced relationship-based traumas such as institutionalization, multiple foster placements, maltreatment, and/or neglect. We will explore how The Adoption Exchange has implemented TBRI® training in Colorado, success stories, lessons learned, and opportunities for expansion.

**Thursday May 18, 2017 (1:15 pm – 2:30 pm)**

**Recruitment Track:**

**Customer Service Approach to Working with Potential Foster/Adopt Families**

**Presenter:** Rachel Kinder and Carrie Dawson at Mission West Virginia

The workshop will address working with prospective foster/adoptive parents from the initial call to certification and beyond. We will discuss initial family contacts as well as information and referral services. Focus will be on a customer-service based approach for handling retention of inquiries, screening processes, and our strategies for "problem" callers. We will explore building and maintaining relationships with certification/licensing agencies and engaging families in a neutral referral process.

**Retention Track: Partnering for Permanency:**

**How public and Private Agencies can help waiting children**

**Presenter:** Beverly Clarke at The Barker Adoption Foundation and Brandi Hill at Prince George's County

During this workshop you will hear from both a public child welfare worker and a director of a private older child adoption program. Together, we will explore how private adoption agencies and public child welfare agencies can effectively partner with each other to find permanent and loving adoptive families for waiting children.

**Post-Permanency Track:**

**Supporting Families who Adopt Older Youth**

**Presenter:** Heidi Raubenolt, Michelle Parra, and Amanda Dunham at Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange

Recognizing an unmet need for support to parents adopting children unknown to them, particularly those matches facilitated through Michigan's adoption exchange, the MARE Match Support Program was created. This 90 day intervention model provides adoptive parents with referrals to community resources and support groups, educational training opportunities and assistance with safety planning, parenting skills, and building a support network. This model has resulted in increased preservation rates for matches and more youth finding forever families.

## **GENERAL SESSIONS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS:**

**Wednesday May 17, 2017 (8:30 am – 10:15 am) 1 hour 45 minutes**

**Life In Limbo: We will leave our comfort zones and enter foster care**

**Presenter: David White, Fostering Great Ideas and Chauncey Strong, Consultant**

For children in foster care, permanency is priority #1. Living with uncertainty can create anxiety for many of the children. We will share in their emotions, and learn of solutions, through this interactive role play of life in foster care. Our takeaways will be further compassion and renewed urgency to continue our work.

**Wednesday May 17, 2017 (4:15 pm – 6:00pm)**

**Welcome and Networking Reception, Silent Auction**

**Hosted by: AEA Board of Directors**

Build relationships and connect with peers across the country during AEA's welcome reception and silent auction. Visit our 35th Anniversary exhibit and learn about AEA's history. Enjoy hors d'oeuvre and social time with members of the adoption community.

**Thursday May 18, 2017 (8:30 am – 9:45 am) 1 hour 15 minutes**

**Wendy's Wonderful Kids: Taking an evidence-based program to scale**

**Presenter: Rita Soronen at Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption**

In working to normalize the notion that unadoptable is unacceptable, the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption has spent more than a decade implementing child-focused recruitment across North America. Rita Soronen, president & CEO of the Foundation will share the journey of creating, growing, evaluating and now taking to scale a practice model that works on behalf of those children and youth most at risk of aging out of care.

**Thursday May 18, 2017 (11:30 am – 1:00 pm) 1 hour 30 minutes**

**AEA Awards Luncheon**

Recognizing excellent practice. Awards include: The Generosity of Spirit Award, Lillian Lansberry Award, and the National Wednesday's Child Award. The luncheon will also feature a special presentation by Bridge Meadows CEO, Derenda Schubert PhD. Bridge Meadows is an award-winning intergenerational housing community which builds place, permanence and purpose for foster youth, adoptive parents, and elders in the state of Oregon.

**Thursday May 18, 2017 (2:45 pm – 4:00 pm) 1 hour 15 minutes**

**Reshaping Adoption in the 21st Century: from "Child Placement" to "Family Success"**

**Presenter: Adam Pertman at National Center on Adoption and Permanency and Dr. Ruth McRoy at AdoptUSKids**

While child welfare professionals agree the field needs to move beyond its historical “child placement” model, a key question is how to reshape policy and practice to incorporate education, supports and services that enable children and their families to be truly successful. In this keynote, two leading experts on adoption and child welfare review the research and experience of the last few decades, analyze what we’ve learned, and offer a road map for future progress.

## **VOICE FOR ADOPTION POWER BREAKFAST:**

**Thursday May 18, 2017 (7:30 am – 8:15 am) 45 minutes**

Presenter: Schylar Baber at Voice for Adoption

A brief update on what is happening in Washington, D.C., and the state of the child welfare, foster care and adoption funding streams. We will discuss the current political environment, anything VFA sees coming down the pipeline, and how you can be involved.

## **IMPACT INSTITUTES:**

**Wednesday May 17, 2017 (10:15 am – 12:00 pm) 1 hour 45 minutes**

**Achieving Permanency for LGBTQ Youth Institute Part 1**

Presenter: Ellen Kahn at Human Rights Campaign

Drawing on the All Children-All Families approach, this workshop will provide a brief overview of the most recent research on LGBTQ youth in foster care, a framework for assessing the sexual orientation and gender identity of youth, and best practices for supporting and advocating for transgender and gender non-binary children and adolescents. Attendees will improve their ability to help LGBTQ youth identify their needs and concerns related to disclosure, safety, and placement considerations. Attendees will better understand the range and complexities of sexual orientation and gender identity, and how these aspects of identity intersect with other key aspects of a young person’s identity and experience.

**Wednesday May 17, 2017 (1:15 pm – 2:45 pm) 1 hour 45 minutes**

**Child Welfare Leadership Institute**

Presenter: Deborah Burrus at Georgia Department of Human Resources and Lauren Arnold at The Adoption Exchange

This Institute will focus on strategies for achieving adoption outcomes through leadership changes and challenging budgets. Frequently, child welfare leadership changes mean a shift in priorities and budget cuts to programs. You will learn techniques from both the public and private sector to manage these challenges and how working with non-profits can assist States in leveraging services to maximize recruitment opportunities for teens, large sibling groups and youth dealing with significant trauma.

**Thursday May 18, 2017 (10:00 am – 11:15 am) 1 hour 15 minutes**

## **Achieving Permanency for LGBTQ Youth Institute Part 2**

**Presenters:** Ellen Kahn, HRC, and Rich Valenza, RaiseAChild

In this era of marriage equality it is commonplace to see an increase in the number of same-sex couples pursuing adoption, but the ability to be legally married did not solve all of the problems related to bias, unspoken hierarchies in placement, and the unique challenges single LGBTQ applicants face. In this workshop we will review the *All Children-All Families* promising practices, including model policies for LGBTQ-inclusive policies, the essential elements to being a “welcoming” agency, and navigating matching and placement decisions. In addition, we will introduce attendees to the “Raise A Child” successful strategies for effective recruitment and retention of LGBTQ resource families, helping agencies cultivate many more LGBTQ-affirming placements for LGBTQ youth among all licensed, waiting families.

**Thursday May 18, 2017 (1:15 pm – 2:45 pm) 1 hour 30 minutes**

**Interjurisdictional Institute**

**Presenters:** AEA’s National Match Event Taskforce

Join us for facilitated discussions and demonstrations of best practices in inter-jurisdictional adoptions. Visit all ten roundtables and learn about: locating adoption-competent therapists, developing purchase of service contracts, AdoptUSKids, NEICE, AAICPC/ ICAMA, using technology to match children, linking adoptive families to support groups, transitioning children from foster to adoptive homes, talking with children about adoption, and agency barriers to adoption/research findings. Then join us for the National Match Event, on the following day, and broaden your search area for the children and families you serve.

## **NATIONAL MATCH EVENT & EXPO:**

**Friday May 19, 2017 (9:00 am – 12:00 pm) 3 hours**

Stay an extra half-day for the Breaking Down Barriers to Adoption National Match Event and Expo. Purchase an exhibit table and present your waiting children and families to other adoption professionals across the country. Broaden your search area for the children and families you serve, make matches and receive training to successfully place children across state lines and support the families.

**For More Conference Information:  
[adoptea.org/nationalconference](http://adoptea.org/nationalconference)**