

Monthly Calendar

December 2024 Events and Programs

ADULT ADOPTEES, BIRTH PARENTS & DNA DISCOVERIES

General Discussion Meetings

Support and discussion groups for adult adoptees, birth parents, siblings, adoptive parents, prospective parents, professionals, and anyone interested in exploring the lifelong journey of adoption. Individuals from any location are encouraged to join. We believe adoption is a complex, lifelong, and intergenerational journey for all those whose lives are impacted by it. These meetings connect and empower individuals impacted by adoption, kinship, foster care, and DNA Discoveries and provide a source of healing, understanding, and learning.

All meeting times are shown in Eastern Time. Meetings are held via Zoom and registration is required to receive the meeting link. For more information on General Discussion Meetings and a list of upcoming special topics, please visit our website.

General Discussion Meeting Dates: (Virtual unless noted otherwise)

Dec. 5, Thurs., 7-9 PM led by facilitators JJ & Rosemary

Dec. 9, Mon., 7-9 PM | **Quarterly In-Person Meeting**
led by facilitators Kim & Denice

Dec. 12, Thurs., 7-9 PM led by facilitators Kim & Denice

Dec. 19, Thurs., 7-9 PM led by facilitators Dottie & Estes

Dec. 26, Thurs., 8-10 PM led by facilitators Barbara & Dan

Register at <http://bit.ly/CalendarANC>.

Special Topic: Empty Seat at the Table

**In-Person (12200 Fairhill Rd. Cleveland, OH)
Monday, December 9, 6:30-8:30 PM ET**

Want to come to a General Discussion Meeting in person? Our in-person meeting is now held quarterly! Please join us as we discuss adoption-related challenges that arise during the holidays. How do we manage split loyalties, celebrations with two families following reunion, or the figurative "empty seat at the table" held for grief, loss, longing and unanswered questions?

Register at <http://bit.ly/CalendarANC>.

DNA Discovery Support Group (Virtual) Tuesday, December 3, 8:00-10:00 PM ET

If you have either found family using commercial DNA testing or been found by family who used commercial DNA testing (examples of commercial DNA testing are Ancestry.com, Family Tree DNA, 23&Me, My Heritage, etc.) then this is the group for you. You do not need to have a formal adoption connection to be in this group, but you do need to have a DNA discovery for this group to be relevant to you. Finding family, or being found - whether you are looking or not - is a major life event. It can upend long-held beliefs about ourselves and challenge the very things that make us feel like, well..., ourselves.

This group will focus on supporting each other during and after such DNA discoveries. These are not one time events; they are lifelong journeys. This peer support group is not meant to delve into the technical aspects of understanding your DNA results, but rather serve as additional support on your personal journey to integrate your DNA findings into your life. The focus of this group is on the emotional journey, and not the technical aspects of DNA results or the interpretation of results. This group is facilitated by Becky and Oliver.

Register at <http://bit.ly/CalendarANC>.

Birth Mother Support Group (Virtual) Wednesday, December 4, 7:00-9:00 PM ET

Our Birth Mother Support Group provides a safe and supportive environment to help with the complexities that are often part of the adoption experience. The meetings are open to birth mothers connected by the lifelong journey of adoption and are an opportunity for birth mothers to encourage one another in their healing process through discussion and interaction. Birth mothers who have experienced closed adoptions or adoptions with varying degrees of openness attend this meeting. We invite you to join this group of women, who are at different places on the same journey, to give and receive understanding and support. The group is facilitated by Lindsey and Nikki.

Register at <http://bit.ly/CalendarANC>.

Adoption 101: Where Do I Begin?**Sat., Dec. 7, 8:30 AM-12:30 PM, Virtual**

Considering becoming a parent or expanding a family through adoption can be both exciting and overwhelming. There is so much information available about adoption that people often ask, "Where do I begin?" Adoption 101 is a workshop intended for people looking into adoption for the first time.

Holiday Cookie Party**Sat., Dec. 14, 2:00-4:00 PM ET, In-Person
Pilgrim UCC (2592 West 14th St.)**

We are excited to welcome families for a festive cookie-decorating party! Simply bring a container to take home your confectionary masterpieces or memorable mistakes of sprinkling sugars and icing. Adoption Network Cleveland will provide cookies, frosting, and sprinkles. Registration is required to help us best prepare for you and yours.

NAMI Family Support Group**Mon., Dec. 16, 6:30-8:00 PM ET, Virtual**

In partnership with NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), this Family Support Group is peer-led and intended for parents and caregivers of children and youth (18 and under) who are experiencing behavioral or mental health symptoms. This group allows your voice to be heard and provides an opportunity for your personal needs to be met.

Transracial Adoptive Parent Support**Thurs., Dec. 19, 7:00-8:00 PM ET, Virtual**

"Reflections: Making and Breaking Traditions." Adoption Network Cleveland and Transracial Journeys join forces to hold a series of co-hosted monthly support groups for parents who have adopted children outside of their own race, aiming to provide an intentionally structured and supportive space where parents can hear from leaders with lived expertise and come together to share their experiences, challenges, and successes in raising transracially adopted persons.

Monsters Hockey Game**Sat., Dec. 28, 7:00-10:00 PM ET, In-Person**

Join us for an evening of Family Friendly Fun as the Cleveland Monsters take on the Grand Rapids Griffins. There will be a Monsters scarf giveaway for the first 5,000 fans. All tickets will be transferred electronically via Seat Geek

Register for all programs at <http://bit.ly/CalendarANC>.

Monday Evening Speaker Series**DNA Decoded: Harnessing Epigenetic Testing to Empower Members of the Adoption Constellation and Revolutionize Tools for Behavioral Wellness (Virtual)****Monday, Dec. 2, 8:00-9:00 PM ET
Presented Dr. Evelyn Higgins**

While genes play a 10-33% role in physical health, they can play up to a 50% role in mental health. For those in the DCP, NPE, and adoption communities, being separated from lineage can present challenges when it comes to understanding the biology behind behavioral wellness. Join Dr. Higgins, founder of Wired BioHealth and member of the adoption constellation, to learn more about how genes and other biomarkers can be tested and turned off/on through epigenetics to help individuals live their most optimal lives.

An International Adoptee's Perspective: Navigating Adoptee and Immigrant Identity (Virtual)**Monday, Dec. 16, 8:00-9:00 PM ET
Presented Svetlana Sandoval**

Svetlana Sandoval is an International Adoptee from Russia. She was adopted to the U.S. during the peak wave of international adoptions in the late 90s. Svetlana will share her experience of growing up as an international adoptee, and how her understanding of adoption evolved throughout her teens and young adulthood. Svetlana is in reunion with her birth mother and birth family in Russia, and will share the complexities of navigating a virtual reunion across language and cultural barriers. She will also share how misinformation from her adoption agency left her unaware of her native citizenship status and how dual citizenship has brought additional complexities to traveling to meet her family in person. Svetlana has spent the last two years reclaiming her immigrant identity and will share about her immigrant community experiences and choice to reclaim her original name. Svetlana is currently pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Social Work and will share how her adoptee and immigrant identities have informed her academic path to support international adoptees on their journeys.

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