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Adoption Services

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Save The Date!

FFAS 25th Anniversary Gala Fundraiser, November 16

Honoring Janice Huff, Thea Anema, Gerald P. Mallon, Jane Aronson, and Josephine Baker

Wednesday, November 16, 2011,

FFAS will celebrate our 25th anniversary with a Gala Fundraiser at The Italian Academy at Columbia University, NYC. The theme of the evening is to honor those who choose to “not stand idly by,” and this year we will proudly honor several wonderful adoption and child advocates.

One of New York’s most recognized weather forecasters, **Janice Huff** is the weekday meteorologist for NBC4 delivering weather reports for the station’s news-casts several times daily. In addition, Huff is meteorologist for NBC’s Sunday morning edition of the “Today” show.



Janice Huff

Most importantly to FFAS, she is also host of “Wednesday’s Child,” a weekly adoption feature that airs Wednesdays during “News 4 New York at 6” and again on “Sunday Today in New York.” Each episode highlights a child from the foster care system who is waiting and hoping for a forever family.

A passionate advocate for children and community-related issues, Huff has received numerous accolades for her work on “Wednesday’s Child.” FFAS is proud to add to Ms. Huff’s long list of honors.

When Jasmina, the daughter whom honoree **Thea Anema** had adopted as an infant, was diagnosed with leukemia in 2009, the year that followed was, as Ms. Anema describes it, nothing short of a rollercoaster ride for them.

Although Jasmina ultimately lost her battle with leukemia, Ms. Anema, and her friends and family, are determined to continue her legacy through the wonderful OneForJasmina Foundation. As they have stated on their website (www.OneForJasmina.com) and Facebook page, because of Ms. Anema’s foundation honoring her daughter, the national donor banks gained over 10,000 registries, giving matches so far to at least 19 leukemia patients.

Gerald P. Mallon, DSW, our third honoree, is the Julia Lathrop Professor of Child Welfare and Executive Director of the National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections at the Hunter College Social Work in New York City.

For more than 35 years, Dr. Mallon has been a child welfare practitioner, advocate, educator, and researcher. He is the Senior Editor of the leading professional

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Family Focus Reaches Around the Globe

When you feel you are doing good work, you try to reach as many people as you can, in the hopes of making a positive impact. FFAS strives constantly to teach and encourage families, professionals and agencies to examine their thoughts and practices about adoption.

But how far can we possibly reach to make a difference? Well, aside from the known - a recent training presented in Baton Rouge, LA, and an upcoming conference in Denver, CO - there is a vast unknown, thanks to the power of print media and the internet.

We were recently contacted by a caseworker

worker in Nebraska who saw our Executive Director speak, and wishes to use our article on Inducement in her work.

Even more surprising, after coming across the same article printed in a Canadian newsletter, an editor of an adoption magazine asked permission to reprint it in her own publication - in New Zealand!

It is gratifying to know that Family Focus is having an impact on adoption around the globe.

(You can read our article on inducement by visiting our website at www.familyfocusadoption.org/inducement.html.)

Program Updates

Family Services Program

In an effort to make our services more accessible to those who need us, FFAS is now able to accept credit cards directly, or families can pay their fees for home studies and post-placements through PayPal. Interestingly, despite the very long wait (several years) to adopt from China, people are still calling the office inquiring about having a study done for that country.

Waiting Child Programs

Adoption from Foster Care: Our caseload is filled with sibling groups! We just completed supervising a group of three from Oregon who finalized their adoptions at the end of June; and we're still supervising two groups of four, one of which is also due to finalize soon. We have a sibling group of two; and the possibility for groups of two and three that look promising.

Direct Placement Program

Infant Adoption: We're planning another outreach trip into the community, to provide our materials to hospital social workers and women's services agencies, making sure they know about our programs, and the support we offer to birthmothers. If you know of anyone you think we should visit, please contact our offices, and we will put them on our schedule.

Child Welfare Training

This is the time of year when Family Focus presents at the North American Conference on Adoptable Children, a major international conference of adoptive parents and workers. We are headed to Denver, Colorado, August 4 - 6, and look forward to sharing our material with a large gathering of adoption advocates. We are always well received.

Don't forget to check us out on Facebook!

From Board Member Erin Creatore

When I first joined the Board of Family Focus Adoption Services, I was very excited to become a part of such a wonderful agency. I don't have first-hand experience with adoption in my own family. But as the daughter of a social worker who investigated allegations of child abuse and neglect every day, I learned at a young age how very lucky I was to have a loving family, and I tried to never take it for granted.

The stories that I have heard thus far about the children, both young and older, that have been adopted (or have been on the path to adoption), through Family Focus have been inspiring, heart-wrenching and hopeful. But I expected these stories. I expected to be moved by

these children and their adoptive families and I expected to be rooting for them to finally find their forever homes. I have not been disappointed.

What I guess I didn't expect was how touched and inspired I would be by the *staff* of Family Focus. The staff, (many of them adoptive parents themselves), tirelessly devote themselves to making the agency better. Their dedication is beyond admirable and they are incredibly selfless with their time and energy, even after-hours. The children and families that are brought together through Family Focus will never be just a "number" or a "case" and I think that is an amazing tribute to the staff of Family Focus.



“Let me never fall into the vulgar mistake of dreaming that I am persecuted whenever I am contradicted.”
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Save The Date - 25th Anniversary Gala (Cont'd)

professional journal, *Child Welfare*, and the author or editor of more than twenty-one books. His most recent publication is *Working with LGBTQ Youth: A Youth Worker's Perspective*, which was published in 2010 by CWLA Press. In the same year, Dr. Mallon was presented the Child Advocate of the Year Award by the North American Council on Adoptable Children.

Dr. Mallon earned his doctorate in Social Welfare from the City University of New York at Hunter College, was awarded an MSW from Fordham University and a BSW from Dominican College. He has lectured and worked with child welfare systems extensively throughout the United States, and internationally in Australia, Canada, Cuba, Indonesia, Ireland, and the United Kingdom.

Dr. Jane Aronson has been a pediatrician since 1986. She has a solo pediatric practice in Manhattan specializing in adoption medicine since 2000 and has evaluated well over 10,000 adopted children; she has traveled to orphanages in Russia, Romania, Bulgaria, China, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Haiti and Latin America while on medical missions. In addition, Dr. Aronson is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at Cornell University and Columbia University.

Since 1997, she has provided direct services to orphaned children through her foundation, Worldwide Orphans Foundation (WVO), which began its work by commissioning university students and healthcare professionals, or "Orphan Rangers," to support orphans. Since 1997, Dr. Aronson has funded over 130 Orphan Rangers in 9 countries. Over the past 13 years, WVO has created holistic/organic programs for HIV-infected orphans in Ethiopia and Vietnam as well as schools, camps, sports programs, and early intervention programs for orphaned children in many countries.

Dr. Aronson, who we are honoring for not standing idly by, was inducted into Hunter College Hall of Fame in April 2011. She received an Angel in Adoption Award in 2000, and she was honored by *Glamour* magazine on November 9, 2009, as one of 10 Women of the Year. She is a parent through adoption and has two sons, Benjamin, age 11, from Vietnam, and Desalegn, age 13, from Ethiopia.



Josephine Baker with some of her children

Josephine Baker rose above her humble beginnings in St. Louis, MO, and became a world-renowned dancer and performer. Although these days many know her name because of her entertainment career, she was also a decorated hero in France during WWII, and spent years battling against racism in the United States, in honor of which the NAACP named May 20 "Josephine Baker Day."

Ms. Baker also formed a large family, which she called her "Rainbow Tribe," by adopting, officially and unofficially, thirteen children from countries all around the world. According to the "Official Site of Josephine Baker" website, she wanted to prove that children of different colors and nationalities could live and prosper together. Her family illustrated very personally the way she embraced diversity, and her

mission to encourage brotherhood across racial boundaries.

FFAS will have a special dedication to Ms. Baker, with remarks by her son, Jean-Claude. He is the owner of Chez Josephine, the Manhattan restaurant he named and decorated in her honor; and head of the Jean-Claude Baker Foundation which preserves and celebrates the achievements and legacy of African American entertainers from 1865-1929. We are delighted that Mr. Baker will attend our event, accompanied by his brother, Jarry, to speak about their mother.

If you would like to purchase tickets for Family Focus's 25th Anniversary Gala, or if you can not attend but wish to make a donation in honor of this event, please visit www.familyfocusadoption.org.

