



## WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS!

Two talented women have joined the board of the Adoption Option Committee Inc. We are grateful for the dedication of:

### **Laureen Carlson, Minneapolis.**

Laureen is the president and founder of Portage Marketing, which is a firm that assists companies with strategic marketing, tactical marketing execution, media planning, media placement and Web site development. She is also on the board of Nexus, a national nonprofit that operates treatment programs for children and adolescents. She has led the AOCI in strategic planning and, in the past, orchestrated a successful media launch for the organization's "In the Know" campaign.

### **Amanda Huneke, Minneapolis.**

Amanda is an account executive at the Twin Cities offices of Weber Shandwick, an international public relations firm. She works primarily with public affairs clients on grassroots outreach and event support. She is a member of the Public Relations Society of America, where she supports the Classics Committee. On behalf of AOCI, she has coordinated event logistics and has served as interim secretary.

*AOCI has many volunteer opportunities available, including Web content writing, database management, fund raising, speaking and outreach coordination. Please consider spending a few hours each month working with us on adoption affirmation and advocacy.*



## MOTHER'S DAY CARD

Looking for a Mother's Day idea? Consider a donation to Adoption Option in honor or memory of a special mother in your life. This card will thank that special mother and alert her to the donation made in her honor. Call 952-944-0866 or e-mail [info@aoci.org](mailto:info@aoci.org) for more information.

## TELLING HER STORY

Mary Wright

It was a beautiful Tuesday morning and I was making the drive up to Milaca High School in Milaca, Minn. My drive was uneventful, but my mind was racing, as it always does when I am about to face a room of strangers. Would they listen to me? Would they be awake enough to even know I was there? These things ran through my head before I entered the classroom. But when I was up there presenting, I entered a new world, a world that I am so passionate about.

I have always had a passion for telling my story about making an adoption plan for my daughter nine years ago, but I never thought I would have the opportunities I have had. Recently, my passion and my story have taken me into classrooms and to individuals in Milaca, Isle, Woodbury, Cottage Grove and St. Paul. With the help of AOCI and New Life Family Services, I have been able to reach so many. In May 2008, I spoke at a workshop hosted by AOCI. This workshop was the catalyst for my passion.



Since May, I have been busy! Shortly after the workshop, I was contacted by Life Choices Center in Milaca, who asked me to speak at their annual banquet. I gratefully accepted and was able to share my story with a group of about 150. The response was overwhelming! As I looked over the crowd, I saw smiles, tears, and laughter on the faces that sat before me. I was embraced with hugs and Thank You's afterwards. I knew I had touched someone. In February, Life Choices asked me again to come and present at two local high schools.

I have also had the opportunity to work with some individuals, one-on-one, through Washington County Public Health. These individuals have been faced with making a decision after having their babies. The Public Health Nurses have asked me to present adoption as an option to struggling young birth parents, who are torn between parenting and adoption.

Going back to that car ride, I enjoyed the ride home. I took time to reflect on my experiences and the reactions, or lack there of and that fuels the passion all over again. I look forward to the next opportunity to share my story and educate about the option of adoption. I am extremely thankful for these opportunities as they are all chapters in my journey.

## AOCI WEB SITE GETS MAKEOVER

To remain fresh and engaging, the Adoption Option Committee, Inc. Web site has been updated to offer new functionality and information resources. Visit [aoci.org](http://aoci.org) to:

- Make online donations
- Access the new Adoption Agency Resources chart
- Learn more about Education & Outreach opportunities

If you are interested in supporting AOCI's commitment to adoption affirmation and advocacy, you can now make donations online using PayPal and submit your contact information via an online form to learn more about volunteer opportunities with the organization.

For those considering adoption, the Adoption Agency Resources chart, found under Info & Resources, is a compilation of 2008 data about Minnesota adoption agencies. The layout allows for easy comparison of agency processes, programs, fees, wait times and other relevant information.

This new functionality will allow AOCI to move to an e-mail version of the newsletter and ultimately streamline communication to supporters. Despite these changes, the site will remain a resource for birth mothers seeking support, those who want to learn more about adoption and others committed to the AOCI mission.



## ADOPTION OUTREACH

We are thrilled to have been selected to present a breakout session May 8 at the annual conference of the Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting. The conference is attended by educators, service providers, youth workers, medical professionals and others. Along with presenting AOCI's teen-focused "In the Know" campaign, we will do training and role-playing. We will also share results of ongoing adoption research conducted since the early 80s at the University of Minnesota.

Session summary:

### **Talking with Teens about Adoption**

*Presented by: Jenny Eldredge, Colleen Tronson and Mary Wright*

Looking for straightforward and accurate information about adoption? This session shares comprehensive resources and proven methods for helping teens better understand this option. A birth mother will share her adoption story, and each participant will leave equipped to talk confidently with teens about adoption.

*If your workplace, organization or faith community is interested in similar adoption education, please contact AOCI.*

## FIRST SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Vicky Iacarella

"I believe adoption is important because it can help give you and your baby a better life. If you are not ready to have a baby and still have plans for your future that you want to achieve then adoption is a great thing."

— A birth mother receiving one of our scholarships

By providing scholarships, we offer birth mothers who are not ready to parent a chance to move forward with their lives. Studies have shown that compared to women who choose to raise their children alone, mothers who plan adoption for their children are more likely to finish school and less likely to live in poverty or receive public assistance. Higher education not only contributes to the overall betterment of society but also improves quality of life for the individual. For those birth mothers who make the courageous and difficult choice of adoption for the sake of their children, a scholarship gives AOCI one more way to affirm their courage in carrying through an adoption plan.

We look forward to awarding scholarships to as many applicants as possible who wish to pursue secondary and higher education during the upcoming academic year. But, we can't do it without your gifts and support. Please consider helping young women faced with an unintended pregnancy achieve their goals for the future.

## GRANTS AWARDED

From November 2008 to April 2009, 10 birth mother grants were awarded totaling \$4,600. Grants were awarded for education, medical expenses and rent. Recipients ranged in age from 17 to 39.

## E-MAIL NEWSLETTER

A few of our supporters have expressed interest in receiving our newsletter via e-mail. We would be happy to send an e-newsletter to those preferring this type of update from Adoption Option. Please send your e-mail address to: [info@aoci.org](mailto:info@aoci.org). Thank you.

AOCI's mission is to foster a positive attitude toward adoption, to assure accurate and fair consideration of adoption planning, and to provide financial assistance to birth parents who choose adoption.



CELEBRATING  
TWENTY-FIVE YEARS