

# 2023 Year in Review



*Adoption Network Cleveland's mission is to connect and empower individuals, organizations, and communities impacted by adoption, kinship, and foster care, and we provide a source of healing for those in need.*

**1,500+**

*individuals, children, parents and professionals impacted by services in 2023*

**99**

*dedicated and valued volunteers*

**1,766**

*hours of service*

# Adult Adoptees, Birth Parents & DNA Discoveries

Supported **609** adult adoptees, birth parents, and DNA discoveries.

Supported more than **214** adoptees and birth family members directly in their quest to reconnect after separation, and completed **51** cases.

Held a safe and supportive environment for **39** birth mothers and **43** individuals during and after DNA discoveries via monthly support groups.

Supported **176** individuals with a connection to the adoption constellation in General Discussion Meetings with a cumulative attendance of **577**.

Moved Program Manager: Search, Adult Adoptees, Birth Families and DNA Discoveries to a full-time position and hired a skilled genetic genealogist after staff turn-over to meet program demand.

Responded to **168** Helpline inquiries from adult adoptees, birth families and adoptive families for guidance, validation of feelings and accurate information. Partnered with law firm Hickman and Lowder to offer a three-part educational program for **21** parents and caregivers regarding advocating for their children in school, related to IEPs and 504 plans, as well as general disability rights for children.



## Advocacy & Public Policy

Successfully orchestrated our annual Lobby Day coordinating teams who visited each legislative office to deliver advocacy materials and candy jars. Our **18** volunteers met in person with legislators and staff to discuss important child welfare and adoption issues in **50** key offices.

Spearheaded legislative change resulting in criminalizing Fertility Fraud in Ohio to protect recipient parents and donor-conceived people.

Participated in Interested Party and other meetings on House Bill 5 and submitted detailed recommendations for inclusion regarding ethical adoption practices, truth and transparency in adoption, and sibling connections.

## Education & Community Outreach

Trained **391** individuals with **7** unique workshops providing comprehensive, competency-based information for adoption and child welfare professionals, parents, and caregivers.

Hosted Monday Evening Speaker featuring **18** presentations with activists, authors, artists, and therapists enjoying a cumulative attendance of **421**.

Celebrated with Ohio adoptees as they told their stories through theatrical performances and partnered with their shows in the BorderLight Fringe Festival and the Cincinnati Fringe Festival. Partnered with Cleveland International Film Festival's screening of Sam NOW.

# Families & Youth

Served **786** children, parents and professionals connected to adoptive, foster care and kinship families.

Connected **359** parents and children within the Family Ties program, including a monthly support meeting, social outings and one-on-one support.

Expanded family programming through adding trauma-informed art and yoga for youth at monthly Family Gatherings through partnerships with the Art Therapy Studio and Fostering Hope.

Enjoyed watching a core group of families building a strong community with parents and kids excited to see each other and connect at events.

Partnered with NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) to start a monthly Family Group for parents and caregivers of children and youth experiencing behavioral or mental health symptoms or with a mental health diagnosis. This group is open to all regardless of their connection with our mission.

Educated **32** prospective adoptive parents through attendance at Adoption 101: Where Do I Begin and Adoption 201: Adopting Infants Domestically.

Partnered with Kent State University's First Star Academy to provide group sessions for youth in foster care who are college-bound.

Deepened our partnership with Transracial Journeys to support their annual camp for transracial adoptive families, leading to joint monthly programming to launch in FY 2024.

Expanded volunteer base involved in monthly family programs through increased recruitment, training, and support.

Utilized entry points of Family Resilience Fund and social outings to deepen connections with and involvement of kinship, adoptive and foster families in additional supportive programming.

Mediated **20** cases with families to promote permanency and bring together all of the caring and supportive adults in a child's life to discuss and jointly determine how best to meet the needs of the child.

Provided **43** families with emergency financial assistance to maintain permanency for the children in their care through the Family Resilience Fund.



# Highlights and Accomplishments



Celebrated our 35th Anniversary.

Completed Strategic Planning process to launch our new three-year strategic plan to guide our work starting in FY 2024.

Solidified program delivery methods, choosing what to offer in-person, hybrid, and virtual.

Leveraged unique ongoing partnerships, including with Business Volunteers Unlimited, Justice Bus, the Jewish Book Festival, and OhioKAN.

Hosted Eastin Quantrill for attendees at our Annual Cookout to write letters to youth in foster care through her project *Letters to Foster Children*.

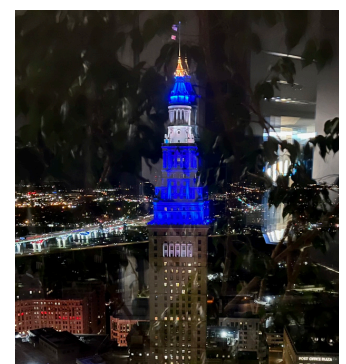
Welcomed graduate-level Cleveland State University MSW Intern Abby Shaw to provide an intensive learning opportunity.

Secured Encore Fellow Tim Angbrandt through BVU to expand our outreach planning and activities.

Served on the OCWTP Assessor Series Curriculum Advisory Group to review curricula for state-wide Adoption Assessor and parent training.

Celebrated National Adoption Awareness Month by lighting Cleveland's Terminal Tower blue and white.

Successfully supported our **\$946,061** operational budget for programs and services through a mix of individual, foundation and corporate gifts of **\$594,262**; state government grants of **\$212,703**; program revenue of **\$23,922**; and endowment and Employee Tax Credit and other miscellaneous income of **\$78,891**.



## Media Attention

*Nation Adoption Awareness Month*: Televised/Web Interview with Cleveland News5 (ABC) with Danita Harris and Mike Brookbank.

Adoption Grant Approved for Ohio: *New Grant Could Offer Thousands to Families Who Adopt* - Interview with Jeff Slawson of WOIO/Channel 19 News.

Fertility Fraud: *Ohio Capital Journal* Article by Chantal Brown, republished by Cleveland WKYC.

HB45 (Adoption Grants): *New Ohio law overhauls, expands state adoption grants* Cleveland Plain Dealer article by Andrew Tobias

Cleveland News5: *Non-profit guides people through journey to find family.*