

Monthly Calendar

December 2023 Events and Programs

ADULT ADOPTEEES, 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.

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. 7, Thurs., 7-9 PM led by facilitators JJ & Kim

Dec. 13, Tues., 6:30-8:30 PM | Kim & Amy | **In-person**

Dec. 14, Thurs., 7-9 PM led by facilitators Kim & Denice

Dec. 21, Thurs., 7-9 PM led by facilitators Dottie & Estes

Dec. 28, Thurs., 8-10 PM led by facilitators Barbara & Dan

Special Topic: Hiding through the Holidays

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

Special Topic: Hiding through the Holidays facilitated by Barbara & Dan

Thursday, December 28, 8:00-10:00 PM ET

The last few months of the year are usually full of joyful celebrations with family and friends. However, emotions surface that seem confusing. What if one prefers to sit the season out, away from it all? When the festivities are over, one tries to quietly resume regularly scheduled life, without understanding why. Is this you? Join us as we unwrap the emotional complexities at our discussion Hiding through the Holidays. Come to share, or listen, or both! All are welcome!

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

DNA Discovery Support Group (Virtual) Tuesday, December 5, 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 6, 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>.

NAMI Family Support Group (Hybrid)**Monday, December 18, 6:30-8:00 PM ET**

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. It encourages empathy, productive discussion, and a sense of community. You'll benefit from others' experiences, discover your inner strength and empower yourself by sharing your own experiences in a non-judgemental space. Please join us in-person at Adoption Network Cleveland's office or participate via Zoom the 3rd Monday of each month. No childcare provided.

Transracial Adoptive Parent Support Group**Thursday, December 14, Virtual
7:00-8:00 PM ET**

Adoption Network Cleveland and Transracial Journeys are joining forces to pilot a series of co-hosted monthly support groups for parents who have adopted children outside of their own race. This collaborative effort aims 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. Questions? Please contact Janelle by email at Janelle.Poskocil@adoptionnetwork.org.

The Nutcracker: Family Social Outing**Saturday, December 16, Playhouse Square
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM**

A production known to audiences of all ages, Cleveland Ballet's The Nutcracker is distinctly Cleveland's and is one not to be missed. The ballet in two acts is based on the original story by E.T.A. Hoffman with music composed by the renowned Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. The fascination of Tchaikovsky's score and the suitability of the theme for Christmas entertainment has inspired many choreographers including Cleveland Ballet's own Artistic Director Gladisa Guadalupe who has created a version with a twist! RSVP by December 11th.

ALL**Monday Evening Speaker Series****Putting People First: A Journey of Rebranding to Prioritize those Most Affected by the Child Welfare System****Monday, December 4, 8:00 - 9:00 PM****Presented by Ligia Cushman, CEO of Families Rising**

This workshop will explore the transformative journey of an organization that successfully rebranded itself to place a strong emphasis on the individuals most profoundly affected by the child welfare system. The presenter will delve into the strategies, challenges, and inspiring stories behind this rebranding process, gaining valuable insights into centering the focus on those directly impacted. Join us to learn how prioritizing people-first initiatives can drive meaningful change and foster more effective engagement within the child welfare system.

Adoption Unfiltered: What We Have Learned**Monday, December 11, 7:30 - 9:00 PM****Presented by Authors Sara Easterly, Kelsey Vander Vliet Ranyard, and Lori Holden**

Adoptee Sara Easterly, birth parent Kelsey Vander Vliet Ranyard, and adoptive parent Lori Holden have been reaching "across the aisles" of adoption for several years. They've collaborated on articles, a podcast, and their forthcoming book, *Adoption Unfiltered*. Together, they have not only created ground-breaking work, but they've also built friendship and learned more about adoption and relationships than they could ever have imagined. In this session, they'll share highlights of what they've learned through the process of both unfiltering adoption and through their unique working configuration.

Adoption 101 (Virtual)**Saturday, December 2 | 9:00 AM-12:00 PM**

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?" In celebration of our 35th Anniversary, this workshop will be free for all attendees. Adoption 201 to follow. Dec. 13, Wed., 6-8 PM.

Cookie Decorating Party (In-Person)**Saturday, December 9****1:00-2:00 PM for Adults****2:00-4:00 PM for Families**

We are excited to welcome everyone 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.

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