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Adoption Network Cleveland Marks 39 Years of Building and Belonging

Annual meeting features keynote on kinship and family identity and honors two advocates for children, families and adoptees

CLEVELAND, OH — October 26, 2026 — Adoption Network Cleveland will mark its 39th year of connecting and empowering people impacted by adoption, foster care and kinship care at its Annual Meeting and Awards on Thursday, November 19, 2026, at its Tremont office, 2592 West 14th Street, Cleveland.

The free public event will highlight the organization's impact in the community, honor two advocates whose work has made a difference for children and families, and explore the lifelong work of understanding family, identity and belonging.

A reception will be held from 6:30–7:00 p.m., followed by the Annual Meeting from 7:00–8:30 p.m.

Keynote: The Family Story We Tell

Brittan Berry will deliver the keynote address, **"The Family Story We Tell: Kinship, Secrecy, and the Lifelong Work of Belonging."**

A Cleveland-based business leader, mother of three and advocate for families whose stories do not fit neatly on a family tree, Berry brings personal experience with kinship care to her work around belonging, education and socioeconomic disparities affecting children. She is Head of Strategy and Operations at Circuit & Chisel, an applied AI company, and holds an MBA from Yale School of Management.

Berry is a supporter of Adoption Network Cleveland and its work creating space for people to speak openly about the many ways families are formed and sustained.

Two Advocates Honored

Sandra Morgan Caesar, of Fredericksburg, Virginia, will receive an Advocate of the Year Award for her work elevating adoptee voices and challenging inequities in adoption and child welfare. Drawing on her lived experience and professional experience in child welfare, Caesar advocates particularly for Latin American, transracial, transnational and Black adoptee communities through social media, storytelling, podcasts and adoptee-led conferences.

Caesar also has played an important role in Adoption Network Cleveland's peer support community as a co-facilitator of its **Transnational Adoptee Support Group**. Although she now lives in Virginia, she has maintained her connection to ANC and continues to help extend the group's reach to adoptees in the broader community.

Shannon Deinhart, of Eastlake, Ohio, will receive an Advocate of the Year Award for her longstanding commitment to ensuring that children have secure, permanent families and that caregiving families receive the support they need.

As executive director and co-founder of **Kinnect**, Deinhart led the statewide implementation of **Kinnect to Family**, which identifies and engages relatives and other caring adults who can provide children who would otherwise enter foster care with both a home and a lasting network of family relationships. She also led Kinnect's partnership with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to create and operate the **Ohio Kinship and Adoption Navigator (OhioKAN)** program, connecting kinship and adoptive families with information, resources and support.

Deinhart has also supported the implementation of Ohio's Y**outh-Centered Permanency Roundtables**, which center young people in foster care as active participants in decisions about their own permanency.

Celebrating 39 Years of Impact

For nearly four decades, Adoption Network Cleveland has worked to ensure that people affected by adoption, foster care and kinship care have access to connection, support, education and advocacy.

The organization serves adult adoptees and birth family members; adoptive, foster and kinship families; youth in foster care and foster care alumni; and professionals. Its work has also expanded to support people who are donor-conceived or have discovered misattributed parentage, drawing on ANC's expertise in adoption search, reunion and peer support.

"Family is not always simple, and belonging is not something that ends when a child is placed with a family," said **Betsie Norris, Founder and Executive Director of Adoption Network Cleveland**. "For 39

years, we have worked to make sure people have somewhere to turn, that their stories are heard, and that families have the connections and support they need to thrive."

The Annual Meeting is free and open to the public. Community members, professionals, constituents and anyone interested in adoption, foster care, kinship care and family connection are invited to attend.

WHAT: Adoption Network Cleveland Annual Meeting and Awards
WHEN: Thursday, November 19, 2026
Reception: 6:30–7:00 p.m.
Annual Meeting: 7:00–8:30 p.m.
WHERE: Adoption Network Cleveland, 2592 West 14th Street, Cleveland, Ohio
COST: Free and open to the public

About Adoption Network Cleveland

Adoption Network Cleveland is a nonprofit organization founded in 1988 to connect and empower individuals, families and communities impacted by adoption, foster care and kinship care. ANC provides information, advocacy, education, peer support and resources to people and professionals affected by these experiences and works to address their lifelong and intergenerational impact.

For more information, visit **www.adoptionnetwork.org** or follow Adoption Network Cleveland on social media.

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