

ADOPTION NETWORK CLEVELAND

# YEAR IN REVIEW

2020 - 2021

## OUR MISSION

We 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.

1,273

## INDIVIDUALS SERVED

Including Adoptees, Birth Parents, Adoptive Parents, Donor Conceived Individuals, Individuals with a Non-adoption related DNA Discovery, Kinship Caregivers, Foster Parents, Youth in Foster Care, Foster Alum, Family Members, and Professionals in the Field

239

## HELPLINE CALLS ANSWERED



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# BY THE NUMBERS

ADOPTION NETWORK CLEVELAND



## 342 SERVED

### SERVICES FOR FAMILIES

Family Ties Parent & Youth Program  
Educational Liaison Services  
Weaving Cultures Transracial Families  
Embrace Mentoring  
Family Resilience Fund  
Permanency Mediation  
Ohio Kinship & Adoption Navigator  
Prospective Parent Workshops  
Helpline

## 295 PARTICIPANTS

### FAMILY TIES PARENT & YOUTH PROGRAM

Serving adoptive, kinship, and foster families through one-on-one support, monthly groups, educational training opportunities, peer network building, normalizing family social activities, information and referral, and personal advocacy.

## 14 YOUTH

### PERMANENCY MEDIATION

Six cases were mediated to encourage all of the adults in a child's life to consider the best placement for the child and ensure all of the adults in the child's life stay engaged and committed to the child, regardless of placement outcomes.

## 31 INDIVIDUALS

### WORKSHOPS FOR PROSPECTIVE PARENTS

Adoption 101: Where Do I Begin? and Adoption 201: Domestic Infant Adoption workshops assist prospective adoptive parents in learning about the adoption process and key considerations.

## 33 PARENTS

### EDUCATIONAL LIAISON SERVICES

Educational Liaison Services provide support for parents whose children are experiencing challenges at school, including applying and advocating for an Individualized Education Program or 504 Plan, preparing for IEP and 504 meetings, connection to education resources, intervention and accommodation strategies, and coordination with educators.

## 16 FAMILIES

### FAMILY RESILIENCE FUND

16 families impacting 74 parents and children received emergency financial assistance to maintain permanency for the children in their care, including housing, utilities, clothing, food, and childcare assistance.

# 493 SERVED

## SERVICES FOR ADULT ADOPTees, BIRTH PARENTS & DNA DISCOVERIES

Search & DNA Assistance  
 General Discussion Meetings  
 Birth Parent Support  
 Birth Mother Support Group  
 DNA Discovery Support Group  
 Life Coaching  
 Helpline

# 166 INDIVIDUALS

## GENERAL DISCUSSION MEETINGS

General Discussion Meetings provide a safe place where people can share their feelings and experiences, get support from their peers, and learn from others' perspectives. All members of the adoption constellation are welcome to attend.

- 711** Cumulative Attendance
- 12** Special Topic Presentations
- 1** New Monthly Group Launched:  
DNA Discovery Support Group

# 31 BIRTH MOTHERS

## BIRTH MOTHER SUPPORT GROUP

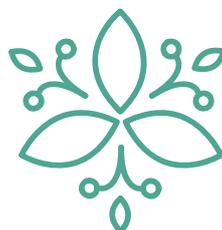
Our Birth Mother Support Group restarted in May 2021 with new facilitators. The group provides a safe and supportive environment to help with the complexities that are often part of the adoption experience. The meetings are open to birth mothers connected by the lifelong journey of adoption and are an opportunity for birth mothers to encourage one another in their healing process through discussion and interaction.

# 311 INDIVIDUALS

## SEARCH & DNA ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Serving adult adoptees, birth parents, birth family, individuals who are donor conceived or who have experienced a DNA discovery. Providing expert, personalized support for individuals interested in finding birth family.

- 46** Cases Completed
- 55** New Cases



# 170 CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

## JOURNEYS OF DISCOVERY CONFERENCE

**33** Presentations  
**5** Keynotes

Adoption Network Cleveland is a partner of the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program, providing comprehensive, competency-based training for adoption and child welfare professionals, parents and caregivers. Multiple workshops are offered throughout the year on a variety of topics.

## 52 ADOPTION ASSESSORS

### OCWTP ADOPTION ASSESSOR TRAININGS

**91** Cumulative Attendance  
**24** Workshops

## 22 PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

### OCWTP PARENT TRAININGS

**26** Cumulative Attendance  
**6** Workshops



# 310 INDIVIDUALS

## MONDAY EVENING SPEAKER SERIES

Our Monday Evening Speaker Series was developed as a virtual platform to provide accurate information regarding the needs of our community through presentations by national, regional and local experts. Presentations in 2021 featured authors, therapists and subject matter experts in the field of adoption, foster care, and DNA discoveries.

**597** Cumulative Attendance  
**19** Expert Presentations

# 95 INDIVIDUALS

## THIS IS US DISCUSSION GROUP

Adoption Network Cleveland uses the NBC hit show *This Is Us* as a launching point for facilitated discussions on a variety of adoption and foster care discussions addressing the lifelong impact of adoption and foster care.

**132** Cumulative Attendance  
**6** Discussions

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF NOTE

ADOPTION NETWORK CLEVELAND

- Adoption Network Cleveland partnered with Adoption Knowledge Affiliates and Adoption and Foster Family Coalition of New York to co-host the [Journeys to Discovery Conference](#), presented virtually and attended by constellation members and professionals from across the U.S. and Internationally.
  - Traci Onders, Search Specialist - Adult Adoptees, Birth Parents & DNA Discoveries, co-presented at the [Journeys to Discovery Conference](#) on *Decoding Your DNA Identity*.
  - Traci Onders published an article in [Severance Magazine](#) to launch our DNA Discovery Support Group: <https://severancemag.com/new-support-group-for-the-emotional-side-of-dna-discoveries/>.
  - Donikea Austin, Program Manager - Families & Youth, co-presented with parent volunteer Kryisia Orłowski for Connecting for Kids Speaker Series on *Five Things that Transracial Families Need to Know to Thrive* in May 2021.
  - Adoption Network Cleveland's Public Policy Committee coordinated proponent testimony for the Ohio House of Representatives Criminal Justice Committee supporting [House Bill 64](#) which would outlaw fertility fraud, March 2021.
  - For the second year in a row, the organization was unable to hold our Creating Futures Benefit & Silent Auction to raise funds in support of programs. Our Outreach & Development Committee and development staff organized and produced a peer-to-peer fundraising campaign, [Creating Refreshing Futures](#), during the month of May, highlighting our unique programs, public policy work, and raising more than \$58,000.
  - Adoption Network Cleveland was successful in raising operational funds for the year, raising over \$1,000,000 in funds and investing more than \$200,000 into our reserves for future programming.
  - As part of our Monday Evening Speaker Series, Adoption Network Cleveland hosted national best-selling author Gabrielle Glaser to discuss her newest book, *American Baby: A Mother, A Child, and the Shadow History of Adoption*.
  - Two adoptive families served by Adoption Network Cleveland, the Shunk Family and the Nachman Family were both featured as part of WKYC's *A Home for the Holidays*.
  - Betsie Norris, Executive Director, and Carrie Lauterbach, Public Policy Committee, were interviewed by WCPO in Cincinnati, highlighting fertility fraud and Carrie's personal story.
  - Adoption Network Cleveland attended the Cuyahoga County Fair as a vendor, sharing information on our programs and services.
  - Trained Child and Family Advocates (CASA) of Cuyahoga County volunteers on [Older Children and Adoption](#). The training was recorded for viewing by future volunteers.
  - Partnered with The OLLIE Foundation in the United Kingdom on an internationally attended presentation, *The Trauma of Relinquishment - Adoption, Addiction & Beyond*, hosted by Zara Phillips in conversation with Dr. Gabor Maté, April 2021. Over 400 attendees.
  - Became a part of OhioKAN as Regional Site Partner, hiring two Kinship and Adoption Navigators as part of our staff, covering Cuyahoga, Medina, and Summit Counties.
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