



NATIONAL ANGELS IN ADOPTION®

1999 - 2025

2025

Ferring Pharmaceuticals

2024

Sound of Hope: The Story of
Possum Trot
Arnold & Porter

2023

CCAI Visionaries:
Kerry Marks Hasenbalg,
Kathleen Strottman, and
The Honorable Mary
Landrieu

2022

Alec Ingold

2021

Hoda Kotb
Tatyana McFadden
Jenny and Dave Marrs

2020

Magnolia Earl and Family
Todd Tilghman
Miranda and Luke Caldwell
This Is Us

2019

Sean Anders
NVIDIA

2018

Claudette and Jack Gerard

2017

Scott and Tracie Hamilton

2016

Jimmy Wayne
NFL's Minnesota Vikings

2015

Connie Britton

2014

Dr. Jennifer Arnold and Bill Klein
Shonda Rhimes
Debra Steigwerwaldt Waller

2013

Willie and Korie Robertson
Deborra-Lee Furness Jackman
Rita Benson LeBlanc

2012

Katherine Heigl and Josh Kelley
Ne-Yo
People Magazine
Dr. Sharen Ford

2011

Nia Vardalos
Scott Fujita
Freddie Mac Foundation
Greg Buzek

2010

Kristin Chenoweth
Extreme Makeover: Home Edition
Rhea Perlman

2009

Judge Michael Nash
Al Roker
Sean and Leigh Ann Tuohy

2008

CBS
Ashley Rhodes-Courter

2007

Alonzo Mourning, Jr.
Patti LaBelle
Marcus Samuelsson

2006

Daunte Culpepper
Invisible Children
Darryl "DMC" McDaniels

2005

Laura Bush
Jars of Clay
Victoria Rowell
Sesame Workshop

2004

Jane Seymour
Kirk and Kathy Triplett
Pat and Ruth Williams

2003

Muhammad and Lonnie Ali
Bruce Willis

2002

Hallmark Channel
Antwone Fisher

2001

Dave Thomas (posthumous)
Johannes van Loon
Steven and Mary Beth Chapman
Rosie O'Donnell

2000

The Honorable Tom Bliley
Children's Action Network
Lynette Cole; Gail and Larry Cole
Bertha Holt

1999

Freddie Mac Foundation



NATIONAL ANGELS IN ADOPTION® 1999 - 2025

FERRING PHARMACEUTICALS | 2025

Biopharmaceutical Company

Ferring Pharmaceuticals is a privately-owned, research-driven biopharmaceutical company focused on developing life-changing innovations that help people live better lives. Grounded in a 70-year commitment to science and research, Ferring is relentless in its pursuit of therapies that help people build families, stay healthy, and fight disease. With a strong focus on reproductive medicine and maternal health, Ferring has pioneered innovations that empower individuals and families to pursue their dreams of parenthood. Beyond its groundbreaking science, Ferring has demonstrated extraordinary leadership in supporting adoption and foster care communities. At Ferring, adoption is recognized as a gift for so many families, and the company is proud to support its people on their journey to parenthood—no matter their path. Ferring Pharmaceuticals has consistently been recognized by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption as one of the most adoption-friendly workplaces in the U.S. Their commitment to building families extends not only to the millions of patients they serve, but also to the hundreds of people they employ in the U.S. All Ferring parents—moms, dads, and adoptive parents—are offered paid parental leave to spend quality time with their growing families and adjust to life with a new child. In addition, the company's Adoption Assistance Program provides reimbursement for qualified adoption-related expenses, while its inclusive family-building benefits also extend to reimbursement for qualified expenses relating to surrogacy. By combining cutting-edge medical advances with compassionate advocacy, Ferring Pharmaceuticals exemplifies the spirit of the Angels in Adoption® program and is helping to build a world in which every child has a safe, nurturing, and permanent family to call their own.

FERRING
PHARMACEUTICALS



NATIONAL ANGELS IN ADOPTION®

CCAI VISIONAIRIES

KERRY MARKS HASENBALG | 2023 **Founding and Former Executive Director of CCAI**



Kerry Marks Hasenbalg began her work on Capitol Hill as the fellow for the Congressional Coalition on Adoption (CCA). In 2001, together with the four congressional co-chairs of the CCA, Kerry created the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI). As the organization's founding executive director, she worked closely with congressional members on child welfare issues in the U.S. and abroad. Under her leadership, both the Congressional Angels in Adoption awards program and the Congressional Foster Youth Internship program were created. Kerry has visited more than 40 countries, often meeting with both high-ranking government officials and the poorest of the poor to advocate for improved child welfare policies and practices. Prior to her work in DC, she spent three years working in Russia as an interpreter for Christian mission groups and later with adoption organizations. Over the years, Kerry and her husband, Scott, have been known to work in tandem for children's causes. In their joint efforts, they have been instrumental in the creation of several charitable organizations, including Christian Alliance for Orphans, where Scott served as a founding board member; North Branch Young Life, where Scott and Kerry serve as committee members; Calvary Chapel DC Metro; Orphan Institute; Show Hope, where Scott served as the Executive Director for 12 years under the board leadership of its founders, Steven Curtis and Mary Beth Chapman; and CCAI. In recent years, Kerry has led dozens of private formation retreats for leaders and lay people from the US and abroad. She and Scott live together in Danville, Pennsylvania, with their four children, Cole, Maya, Leah, and Annika, whom she homeschools.



NATIONAL ANGELS IN ADOPTION®

CCAI VISIONAIRIES

KATHLEEN STROTTMAN | 2023 **Former Executive Director of CCAI**



For almost twenty years, Kathleen has been a sought-after expert on policies related to the welfare of children. Her career is marked by a profound dedication to improving the lives of children both domestically and internationally. As a trusted advisor to Senator Mary Landrieu, Kathleen played a pivotal role in passing key pieces of legislation, including the Intercountry Adoption Act, the Child Citizenship Act, the Adoption Tax Credit, and the Family Court Act. As Executive Director for the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI) and the Global Alliance for Children, Kathleen worked tirelessly to increase opportunities for positive dialogue and the exchange of best practices between the United States and its partner countries. Her leadership at CCAI was marked by her ability to bring together diverse stakeholders to address complex issues in adoption and child welfare. A regular presenter at national and international conferences, Kathleen has appeared on CNN, Fox News, CBS, C-SPAN, PBS, and numerous other media outlets, bringing attention to critical issues in child welfare and adoption. She attended Whittier Law School's Center for Children's Rights, graduating with honors and receiving a state-certified specialty in juvenile advocacy. Kathleen and her husband, Matt, are the proud parents of four children and live in Alexandria, Virginia. Her personal experiences as a mother further fuel her passion for ensuring that all children have the opportunity to grow up in safe, nurturing, and permanent families. Kathleen's visionary leadership and impactful contributions to child welfare have earned her a distinguished reputation as a CCAI Visionary.



NATIONAL ANGELS IN ADOPTION®

CCAI VISIONAIRIES

THE HONORABLE MARY LANDRIEU | 2023

**Former U.S. Senator of Louisiana, Senior Policy Advisor,
Van Ness Feldman LLP**



Senator Mary Landrieu served in the United States Senate for three terms, first elected in 1996. As a member and later Chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, she passed significant legislation, including the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA), the Israel American Energy Alliance, and the RESTORE Act, the largest federal investment in the Gulf Coast in U.S. history. Landrieu also served on the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Appropriations Committee and chaired the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee. As Chair, she was the lead sponsor of the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010, creating and retaining over 650,000 American jobs. Known for her bipartisan approach, Landrieu was a passionate advocate for Louisiana, especially after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Before her Senate career, she served in the Louisiana State Legislature from 1979 to 1987, championing causes related to women and children, flood protection, and education reform. Elected as State Treasurer in 1987, she implemented strong fiscal management, pension fund diversification, and created the first-ever municipal investment fund, now valued at over \$2 billion. Senator Landrieu serves on the Board of Directors of CenturyLink, the second-largest U.S. communications provider to global enterprise customers. In the non-profit sector, she is on the boards of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, Resources for the Future, and the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, representing over 145 Members of Congress working to remove barriers for vulnerable children and families. A graduate of Louisiana State University, Landrieu is married to Frank Snellings, an attorney and real estate broker in Washington, DC. They have two grown children and one grandchild.



ALEC INGOLD | 2022

Miami Dolphins Fullback, Founder of the Ingold Family Foundation



Alec Ingold, the fullback for the Miami Dolphins, seamlessly intertwines his NFL career with his passion for fostering positive change in the lives of children. Adopted at birth, Ingold's journey exemplifies the transformative power of love and support. Beyond football, he serves as a beacon of hope for foster care and adoption advocacy. Ingold's commitment to giving back is evident in his roles as a national spokesperson for AdoptUSKids and the founder of the Ingold Family Foundation. His foundation, dedicated to empowering youth in foster care and promoting financial literacy in schools, hosts events like football camps and back-to-school drives, enriching the lives of foster children. Ingold's personal experience drives his advocacy work, inspiring others with his openness about his adoption journey. His dedication extends from his hometown of Green Bay, Wisconsin, to efforts in Las Vegas and Miami. Ingold's legacy of love and advocacy serves as a powerful reminder that one person can indeed make a difference, inspiring others for years to come.

TATYANA MCFADDEN | 2021

U.S. Champion Athlete: 17-time Paralympic Medalist, 23-time Major Marathon Winner, Track and Field world record holder



Tatyana McFadden is considered the fastest woman in the world. She has 17 Paralympic medals (including seven gold medals), 24 World Major Marathon wins including four consecutive Grand Slams (first place in Boston, Chicago, NYC and London marathons in the same year) and has broken five world records in track and field. Born with spina bifida, Tatyana McFadden spent the first six years of her life in a Russian orphanage with virtually nothing, not even a wheelchair. Paralyzed from the waist down, and with no other way to move, she learned to walk on her hands to keep up with the other children. Little did she know that the powerful arms and hands she began to develop as a small child would someday carry her around the globe as one of the world's greatest athletes.



JENNY + DAVE MARRS | 2021

HGTV's Fixer to Fabulous' Home Renovation Duo

Home renovators Dave and Jenny Marrs bring old houses back to life in HGTV's Fixer to Fabulous. With a little love and a lot of talent, the husband-wife duo restores timeworn homes into contemporary living spaces in their hometown of Bentonville, Arkansas. Together since 2004, they have completed around 300 custom new homes and run Marrs Developing, a company that specializes in the renovation and restoration of historic homes in the Northwest Arkansas area. Dave is an expert craftsman, builder, general contractor, and all-around handyman while Jenny is a designer and the creative backbone of their renovations. They are also parents to five little ones - twin boys, two daughters and a toddler. Jenny and Dave are passionate about orphan care, family preservation, and adoption; they adopted their daughter Sylvie from the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2014. The Marrs family also started a blueberry farm in Northwest Arkansas as a way to provide an educational and skills opportunity for orphaned and at-risk teenage boys in Marondera, Zimbabwe.



HODA KOTB | 2021

Co-Author of NBC's TODAY, New York Times Bestselling Author, Journalist

Hoda Kotb is the co-anchor of NBC News' TODAY. She is also the co-host of TODAY's fourth hour, alongside Jenna Bush Hager. Kotb joined NBC News in 1998 as a correspondent for Dateline NBC. While at NBC News, Kotb has been honored with Emmy awards, a Gracie award and an Edward R. Murrow award. She is also the host of "The Hoda Show on SiriusXM." Kotb started her broadcast career in local news, anchoring and reporting for stations in New Orleans and Fort Myers, Florida. She has covered a wide variety of domestic and international stories, as well as numerous human-interest stories and features, across all NBC News platforms. Hoda is mom to two daughters brought to her family through adoption, Haley Joy and Hope Catherine. Her daughters inspired to write two children's books, "I've Loved You Since Forever" and "You Are My Happy."





MAGNOLIA EARL & FAMILY | 2020

Gerber Spokesbaby



Magnolia's joyful expression, playful smile, and warm, engaging gaze captured Gerber's attention right away, showcasing her sunny personality and melting the judges' hearts. Born into a loving family, Magnolia's story highlights the evolving definition of family. On May 9th, 2019, the Earls received a call from the Adoption Agency about an expectant mom in labor who wanted to talk to them. They pulled off the highway, connected with her amazing birth parents, and welcomed this sweet baby girl into their lives just hours later. Adoption holds a special place in the Earl family's heart, as Courtney Earl expressed, "Winning Photo Search is an opportunity to tell Magnolia's story and shed light on all the beautiful and different ways families are made." Magnolia celebrated her first birthday earlier this year on May 9th, joining her two older sisters, Whitney (12) and Charlotte (8), who is also adopted. The three girls share a love for playing together, especially splashing in the kiddie pool and dancing to the Baby Shark song.

TODD TILGHMAN | 2020

"The Voice" Season 18 Champion, Singer, Pastor



Winner of the 18th season of "The Voice," Todd Tilghman seamlessly integrates his professional life with his passion for adoption and foster care advocacy. A pastor and singer from Meridian, Mississippi, Todd captivated nationwide audiences with his powerful performances and heartfelt renditions. Todd's journey to national recognition began with his humble beginnings and a deep connection to his faith and family. He and his wife, Brooke, parents to eight children, including some adopted, showcase their commitment to providing a supportive environment for all. Their dedication extends beyond their family, as they actively advocate for awareness and support for adoption and foster care causes. Through community events, interviews, and collaborations with organizations, Todd highlights the importance of loving homes and the positive impact on children's lives. His ongoing efforts ensure more children find the homes they deserve, making a lasting difference in many families' lives.



MIRANDA & LUKE CALDWELL | 2020

Stars of HGTV's "Boise Boys"

Stars of HGTV's "Boise Boys," Miranda and Luke Caldwell seamlessly blend their professional lives with their passion for transforming homes and advocating for adoption and foster care. Based in Boise, Idaho, the Caldwells have not only renovated numerous homes but have also profoundly impacted the lives of children through their dedication to providing loving homes. Parents to a large family, including several adopted children with special needs, they extend their commitment to adoption advocacy beyond their household. Through speaking engagements, community events, and partnerships with organizations supporting foster and adoptive families, Miranda and Luke tirelessly raise awareness about the importance of supportive environments for all children. Their story inspires many, showcasing how a loving family can profoundly change lives and make a significant impact on the adoption and foster care system. Their work continues to make a significant impact on the adoption and foster care system, encouraging more families to consider adoption and fostering.



THIS IS US | 2020

Acclaimed TV Drama Exploring Family Dynamics and Adoption with Heartfelt Storytelling

Since its debut in 2016, the acclaimed television drama series *This Is Us* created by Dan Fogelman, has captivated audiences worldwide with its emotionally resonant storytelling and compelling characters. At the heart of the show's narrative is the Pearson family, led by patriarch Jack and matriarch Rebecca, portrayed by Milo Ventimiglia and Mandy Moore, respectively. Central to the family's dynamics is their adopted son Randall, sensitively portrayed by Sterling K. Brown, whose journey navigating his identity and relationships has been a focal point of the series. Alongside Randall are his siblings Kevin, played by Justin Hartley, and Kate, portrayed by Chrissy Metz, each grappling with their own personal struggles and triumphs. *This Is Us* is lauded for its sensitive portrayal of adoption and foster care, sparking important conversations and raising awareness about these issues. By depicting adoption in a realistic and empathetic manner, the show helps reduce stigma and promotes a greater understanding of the adoption and foster care systems.





NVIDIA | 2019

American Multinational Corporation and Technology Company



As the world leader in accelerated[®] computing, NVIDIA pioneers advancements in computer graphics, artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and self-driving cars. Under the visionary leadership of CEO Jensen Huang, NVIDIA has continuously pushed the boundaries of technology since its inception in 1993. At the heart of NVIDIA's success is the GPU, a groundbreaking invention that revolutionized gaming, professional graphics, and high-performance computing. The GPU's role in advancing AI has transformed how businesses innovate with data and algorithms. Headquartered in Silicon Valley, NVIDIA fosters a culture of innovation and inclusivity. The company's commitment to its employees is evident in its groundbreaking benefits, including unlimited adoption reimbursement, student loan assistance, and generous parental leave policies. NVIDIA has been consistently recognized for its inclusive workplace practices, earning accolades such as Fortune magazine's Best Places to Work and recognition for supporting parents and LGBTQ equality.

SEAN ANDERS | 2019

Producer, Director, Writer, Filmmaker



Sean Anders, a versatile writer, director, and producer, has left an indelible mark on Hollywood with his acclaimed films, including "Instant Family" (2018), "That's My Boy" (2012), and "Daddy's Home" (2015). However, it's "Instant Family" that stands out as a deeply personal project for Anders. Inspired by his own journey, "Instant Family" offers a heartfelt and authentic portrayal of the foster care and adoption process. Through the characters of Pete and Ellie, played by Mark Wahlberg and Rose Byrne, the film navigates the highs and lows of building a family through adoption, challenging stereotypes, and highlighting the joy and love found in fostering. Anders' decision to delve into the world of adoption in the film was driven by a desire to share his family's story and dispel misconceptions surrounding foster care. By offering a more nuanced and compassionate perspective, he hopes to inspire empathy and understanding among audiences. Sean Anders currently resides in California with his wife, Beth, and their three children, Johnny, Cha-Cha, and Josh.



CLAUDETTE & JACK GERARD | 2018

**Active Leaders of Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints |
President/CEO of American Petroleum Institute**



Claudette and Jack Gerard form an extraordinary team dedicated to making a positive impact in adoption and foster care advocacy. Claudette, a devoted mother of eight children, including twins adopted from Guatemala, exemplifies a life of service and compassion. Her involvement spans leadership roles within The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) and active participation in the Southern Virginia University (SVU) community. Jack, a respected leader in corporate and humanitarian endeavors, serves as Board Chairman at the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI) and President and CEO of the American Petroleum Institute. His visionary leadership has expanded global advocacy efforts, earning recognition as one of Washington's most influential advocates. Together, Claudette and Jack embody values of compassion, service, and dedication, championing adoption and foster care advocacy to enrich the lives of vulnerable children and families.

SCOTT & TRACIE HAMILTON | 2017

**Retired American Figure Skater, Olympic Gold Medalist, Founder of
Scott Hamilton CARES Foundation**



Stars of HGTV's "Boise Boys," Miranda and Luke Caldwell seamlessly blend their professional lives with their passion for transforming homes and advocating for adoption and foster care. Based in Boise, Idaho, the Caldwells have not only renovated numerous homes but have also profoundly impacted the lives of children through their dedication to providing loving homes. Parents to a large family, including several adopted children with special needs, they extend their commitment to adoption advocacy beyond their household. Through speaking engagements, community events, and partnerships with organizations supporting foster and adoptive families, Miranda and Luke tirelessly raise awareness about the importance of supportive environments for all children. Their story inspires many, showcasing how a loving family can profoundly change lives and make a significant impact on the adoption and foster care system. Their work continues to make a significant impact on the adoption and foster care system, encouraging more families to consider adoption and fostering.



JIMMY WAYNE | 2016

Award-Winning Country Music Artist, New York Times Bestselling Author



Jimmy Wayne, a former foster child turned award-winning country music artist, uses his platform to raise awareness for kids in foster care. Known for hits like "Stay Gone," "Paper Angels," and "Do You Believe Me Now," which earned BMI's "Million-Air Award," Wayne has a storied career in music. He toured with Brad Paisley in 2009 and recorded "Sara Smile" with Daryl Hall and John Oates. In 2010, Wayne walked halfway across America highlighting the challenges faced by kids aging out of foster care. His novel, *Paper Angels*, inspired a made-for-TV movie, and his memoir, *Walk to Beautiful*, became a three-time New York Times bestseller. Wayne's advocacy work extends to helping pass legislation in California, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Ohio to extend foster care age to 21. Supported by Coca-Cola, his efforts have received national attention through campaigns like "Share a Coke and a Song." Wayne lives in Nashville, promoting foster care awareness through Project Meet Me Halfway, aiming to build transitional homes for aging-out youth.

NFL'S MINNESOTA VIKINGS | 2016

NFL Professional Football Team, 20 Division Titles, 4 Super Bowl Appearances



The Minnesota Vikings, established in 1960, are a renowned NFL team with 20 division titles and four Super Bowl appearances. General Manager Rick Spielman and his wife Michelle are adoptive parents of six children from the U.S. foster care system, while Executive Vice President of Football Operations Rob Brzezinski and his wife Leah have adopted five children internationally. Leveraging their passion for adoption, they have involved the Vikings in supporting adoptees and adoptive families. The team hosts an annual Vikings Adoption Fun Fest at their training facility, celebrating adoption and raising awareness. This event features professional players, games for kids on the field, and participation from 500 individuals from local adoption agencies. Each November, during National Adoption Month, the Vikings raise adoption awareness at home games. Partnering with the Mixed Roots Foundation, they host an annual Minnesota Twins Adoptee Night, sending adoptive families to the game. The Vikings actively support various adoption partners like the Dave Thomas Foundation and The Gift of Adoption, participating in speaking engagements and raising funds for local adoption agencies.



CONNIE BRITTON | 2015

Emmy-Nominated Actress



Connie Britton, an Emmy-nominated actress renowned for her compelling performances in television and film, has left a profound impact on audiences worldwide. From roles in "Spin City," "24," to "The West Wing," she consistently garners acclaim for her versatile acting prowess. Britton's portrayal of Tami Taylor in "Friday Night Lights" deeply resonated, shedding light on the challenges and triumphs of foster care and adoption. Off-screen, she advocates for children in need of loving homes, leveraging her platform to address these topics in interviews and public appearances. Britton actively supports organizations dedicated to improving the lives of children in foster care and advocating for adoption. Her appointment as a Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Development Programme underscores her commitment to global issues, closely linked to the welfare of children in adoption and foster care systems. Through her work, Britton continues to be a vocal advocate, promoting positive change and inspiring others to support adoption and foster care.

DR. JENNIFER ARNOLD & BILL KLEIN | 2014

Neonatologist, Simulation Educator, Medical Media Expert | Renowned Couple from TLC's *The Little Couple*



Jennifer Arnold, M.D., M.Sc., and her husband Bill, known for their roles on TLC's *The Little Couple*, are passionate advocates for adoption and foster care. Dr. Arnold, renowned for her medical expertise at the Pediatric Simulation Center at Texas Children's Hospital, extends her advocacy to vulnerable populations, including foster children. Her dedication to compassionate care reflects her commitment to improving outcomes for all children. Bill, with a background in senior management roles, brings his expertise to adoption and foster care advocacy. Together, they leverage their platform on "The Little Couple" to raise awareness about the challenges and rewards of adoption and foster care, inspiring viewers to make a difference. Through their advocacy and personal experiences, they champion the cause, encouraging others to provide support and love to children in need of permanent homes.



SHONDA RHIMES | 2014

American Television Producer and Screenwriter



Shonda Rhimes shattered barriers as the first African-American woman to create and executive-produce a Top 10 network series, including the medical drama Grey's Anatomy and its spin-off Private Practice, along with the political thriller Scandal. With a background in screenwriting, Rhimes penned screenplays for films like Crossroads and HBO's Introducing Dorothy Dandridge before making her mark in television. After adopting her daughter Harper Lee, Rhimes delved into TV, creating Grey's Anatomy, drawing inspiration from her fascination with real-life surgeries and her teenage experience as a candy striper. The success of Grey's Anatomy led to the creation of Private Practice and later, Scandal, which further solidified Rhimes' reputation as a groundbreaking creator. Rhimes' work has garnered numerous awards, including Golden Globe and NAACP Image Awards, for her impactful storytelling and representation of adoption and other important social issues. Through her production company, ShondaLand, Rhimes continues to develop compelling series like Lawless, reflecting her commitment to creating content that resonates with diverse audiences.

DEBRA STEIGERWALDT WALLER | 2014

CEO of Jockey International, Founder of the Jockey Being Family initiative



Debra Steigerwaldt Waller, appointed Chairman and CEO of Jockey International, Inc. in 2001, boasts a rich history within the company, having started as an Administrative Assistant in 1982. Throughout her tenure, she held various roles, including Merchandise Manager and Vice President, before assuming her current position. Armed with a Bachelor's degree in elementary and special education from Carthage College, Wisconsin, her leadership extends beyond the corporate sphere. Notably, Waller serves on the Board of Directors of The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption and founded Jockey Being Family in 2005, a corporate initiative supporting adoptive families. She has also contributed to organizations like Carthage College and MargaretAnn's Place, reflecting her dedication to philanthropy and community support.



DEBORRA-LEE FURNESS JACKMAN | 2013

Australian Actress, Producer, Creator of National Adoption Awareness Week in Australia



Deborra-Lee Furness is an internationally acclaimed actress and passionate supporter of children's rights. She is dedicated to giving children worldwide the chance to live fulfilled, joyous lives and reach their full potential. Deborra-Lee is a Patron of the Lighthouse Foundation for Displaced Children in Melbourne, the Fight Cancer Foundation Australia, and International Adoption Families for Queensland. As a World Vision ambassador, she has traveled through Asia and Africa to raise awareness about poverty and the Global Orphan Crisis. Recently, she joined a delegation with President Bill Clinton in Africa to witness Clinton Global Initiative projects. Deborra-Lee leads the Worldwide Orphans Foundation Australia and was honored at their Gala in New York City for her advocacy for vulnerable children. She founded National Adoption Awareness Week in Australia to address the needs of abandoned and vulnerable children worldwide.

RITA BENSON LEBLANC | 2013

Owner/Vice Chairman of the Board for the New Orleans Saints and Pelicans



Rita Benson LeBlanc serves as the Owner/Vice Chairman of the Board for the New Orleans Saints and Pelicans, playing a pivotal role in positioning New Orleans as a premier host city for major events. With a focus on brand, financial, and civic impact, she has led both organizations through significant achievements, including hosting multiple Super Bowls and landing the 2014 NBA All-Star Weekend. Beyond sports, LeBlanc contributes to economic development and community initiatives, serving on various boards and spearheading projects like the redevelopment of Champions Square. Recognized for her leadership, she has been honored by prestigious publications and organizations and oversees substantial charitable contributions, embodying a commitment to New Orleans' revitalization and philanthropy. Her leadership extends to supporting adoption and foster care initiatives, advocating for the well-being of vulnerable children and contributing to broader social welfare efforts.



WILLIE & KORIE ROBERTSON | 2013

Stars of Duck Dynasty, Members of Duck Commander Leadership

Willie Robertson, CEO of Duck Commander and star of A&E's Duck Dynasty, isn't your typical millionaire. Despite his business success, he remains grounded, attributing his savvy negotiating skills to childhood experiences selling fish with his mom. From humble beginnings in a living room operation to transforming Duck Commander into a premier outdoor destination, Willie's business acumen is undeniable. Yet, his greatest joy comes from spending time with family and friends, bush-hogging fields on his tractor, and brainstorming new ideas for his companies. Korie Robertson, Willie's wife and business partner, plays an equally vital role in Duck Commander's success. As the office manager, she ensures smooth operations and prevents the workshop from descending into chaos. Despite not hailing from a hunting family, Korie seamlessly integrated into the Robertson clan. Her journey with Willie began in childhood, evolving into a lifelong partnership marked by mutual support and shared goals. Together, Willie and Korie navigate the challenges of entrepreneurship while prioritizing their roles as devoted parents to five children, including their foster daughter Rebecca. Through their combined efforts, they exemplify the power of family, hard work, and resilience.



DR. SHAREN FORD | 2012

Nationally-Recognized Child Welfare Consultant

Dr. Sharen Ford has dedicated nearly three decades to the Child Welfare Division of the Colorado State Department of Human Services, exemplifying an unwavering commitment to facilitating permanent, loving homes for children. Currently serving as the manager of the Permanency Services Unit, she oversees pivotal programs such as Foster Care, Adoption, and Adolescent Program Services. With academic credentials including a B.A. in English Literature and advanced degrees in Counseling and Counseling Psychology, her multidisciplinary background enriches her approach to child welfare. Sharen's influence extends nationally through her roles on various boards, including the National Association of State Adoption Program Managers and the Christian Alliance for Orphans. Her leadership has garnered recognition, evidenced by accolades such as the Adoption Activist Award and the Adoption Excellence Award for her significant contributions to the field. Despite her professional achievements, Sharen remains grounded in her roles as a wife to Roy, a mother to Jennifer, and a grandmother to Ezra, underscoring her holistic commitment to family and community.





KATHERINE HEIGL & JOSH KELLEY | 2012

Model, Actress, Producer | Musician, Singer, Songwriter



Katherine Heigl, celebrated for her roles in "Grey's Anatomy" and films like "27 Dresses" and "Knocked Up," champions women's rights and animal welfare. She co-founded Hounds of Hope, a dog rescue program, with her mother under the Jason Debus Heigl Foundation, honoring her late brother. Married to musician Josh Kelley since 2007, their devotion is evident, as seen in Katherine directing a music video for Josh's song "Naleigh Moon," dedicated to their adopted daughter, Nancy Leigh Mi-Eun. Josh, a renowned musician, contributes to their shared passion for adoption and family. Adoption holds a special place in their hearts, with Katherine sharing her family's history of adoption on the Ellen DeGeneres Show and Josh expressing profound love for their daughters. Their commitment to adoption, exemplified by their second adoption of Adalaide Marie Hope, inspires hope for all children in need of loving homes.

NE-YO | 2012

Singer, Songwriter, Actor



Debra Steigerwaldt Waller, appointed Chairman and CEO of Jockey International, Inc. in 2001, boasts a rich history within the company, having started as an Administrative Assistant in 1982. Throughout her tenure, she held various roles, including Merchandise Manager and Vice President, before assuming her current position. Armed with a Bachelor's degree in elementary and special education from Carthage College, Wisconsin, her leadership extends beyond the corporate sphere. Notably, Waller serves on the Board of Directors of The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption and founded Jockey Being Family in 2005, a corporate initiative supporting adoptive families. She has also contributed to organizations like Carthage College and MargaretAnn's Place, reflecting her dedication to philanthropy and community support.



PEOPLE MAGAZINE | 2012

American Magazine



PEOPLE magazine, the country's top celebrity weekly, brings its 43 million readers into the red-hot center of the pop culture conversation, delivering the stories the nation is talking about every single week. It provides intimate access into the lives of not only celebrities but also personal, richly reported human interest stories that speak to, and often mirror, the lives of our passionate readers. The magazine has won multiple awards for its coverage of such topics as 9/11, missing and exploited children, the lives of the military, and GLBT issues; and has run hundreds of stories touching on foster care and adoption in its nearly 40-year history. PEOPLE not only regularly features celebrities and their adoptive families on the cover and inside pages; it also tells amazing stories of "ordinary" people opening their homes and their hearts to children from all over the world.

NIA VARDALOS | 2011

Canadian Actress and Screenwriter



Nia Vardalos, born in Winnipeg, Canada, attended Toronto's Ryerson Theater School. For her role as actress and writer of "My Big Fat Greek Wedding," Vardalos was nominated for an Academy Award, a Golden Globe Award, and a Screen Actors Guild Award. She has received numerous awards, including the Independent Spirit, People's Choice, MTV, and Vh1 awards. Her other movie experiences include "Connie and Carla," "My Life in Ruins," and directing "I Hate Valentine's Day." Vardalos has also appeared on TV shows like "Cougar Town," "The Good Guys," "Drop Dead Diva," and "Saturday Night Live." She volunteers her time to run a writing course for underprivileged girls, works with charitable organizations, and advocates for adoption. Vardalos adopted her daughter through American Foster Care and supports adoption causes, including being a spokesperson for jewelry whose proceeds benefit helpusadopt.org, an organization assisting with adoption costs.



SCOTT FUJITA | 2011

American Former Football Linebacker



Scott Fujita, the adopted son of Rodney and Helen Fujita, is best known for his NFL linebacker career. Recently playing with the Cleveland Browns, he has played since 2002 for the Kansas City Chiefs, Dallas Cowboys, and New Orleans Saints, winning Super Bowl XLIV in 2010. Named the Saints' "Man of the Year" in 2009, Fujita is recognized for his community service, charitable efforts, and performance on the field. Raised in a traditional Japanese household by his Japanese-American father and Caucasian mother, Scott considers himself culturally half-Japanese. Fujita's older brother, Jason, is also adopted. He works with Catholic Charities for the New Orleans Diocese, producing PSAs encouraging adoption. His secondary cause is breast cancer awareness, inspired by his mother's survival. Angel's Place, a New Orleans facility for children with life-threatening illnesses, honored him for his visits and donations. Fujita advocates for wetlands preservation, abortion rights, and gay rights. He is married to his college sweetheart, and they have twin daughters.

FREDDIE MAC FOUNDATION'S WEDNESDAY'S CHILD | 2011

National Television Campaign by the Non-Profit Charity Freddie Mac Foundation



An Emmy-nominated program with a proven track record of success, Freddie Mac's Wednesday's Child is part of a national campaign to increase adoptions of foster children. Each week, a child in foster care who is available for adoption is featured on the local evening news. During a segment hosted by a popular local newscaster, viewers are encouraged to learn more about helping these children find homes, and a phone number is provided. The featured children are often the most difficult to place since they are usually older, in sibling groups, and may have health and developmental needs. For these children, this program is often their last chance to find a permanent home and a family. The results have been outstanding. More than 1,500 children have been adopted or are on their way to adoption in permanent, loving homes, giving them a chance for a brighter future. Over 42,000 viewer inquiries have been generated from people interested in becoming foster and adoptive parents.



Greg Buzek | 2011
American magazine



Greg is the Founder and President of IHL Group and one of the Founders of the Retail Orphan Initiative, a charitable foundation that seeks to help the 400 million orphaned and vulnerable children in the world. Noted by RIS News as one of the 25 Most Influential People in Retail, he has a Master's Degree in Business Administration (MBA) from The Ohio State University and 20 years of experience in market analysis, business planning, product development, and consulting with Fortune 500 companies. He is frequently quoted in RIS News, Information Week, Supermarket News, the Wall Street Journal, Time Magazine, and the Washington Post and has been used as a retail technology analyst on NBC Nightly News, CBS News, and CNBC. In addition, Greg has been a guest lecturer for the Wharton School of Business' Global Consulting Practicum and at Belmont University. Before starting IHL, Greg worked with NCR Corporation and Sensormatic Electronics as a marketing and development executive on hardware, software, and electronic security products for the Retail Industry. He founded the Grace 1:27 Orphan Ministry at his church and is active in supporting adoption, orphan care, and foster parents in his local community

KRISTIN CHENOWETH | 2010

Emmy and Tony Award-Winning Actress and Singer



Emmy and Tony Award winner Kristin Chenoweth transitions seamlessly between stage, television, and film. She won an Emmy for her role in ABC's Pushing Daisies, which also received Golden Globe and Emmy nominations for Best Television Series-Musical or Comedy. Kristin appeared in Fox's Glee, starred as Annabeth Schott on The West Wing, and guest-judged on American Idol. She won a Tony for You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown and earned a Tony nomination for originating the role of Glinda in Wicked. Adopted at birth, Chenoweth is dedicated to raising awareness about adoption. She partnered with Wendy's to support the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, kicking off their fourth annual Father's Day Frosty Weekend to raise awareness and funds. To announce the partnership, Kristin treated a group of adopted children from New York City to Frostys and a special Broadway experience at the Broadway Theater, where she stars in Promises, Promises.



EXTREME MAKEOVER: HOME EDITION | 2010

American Reality Television Series



Put together one very run-down house, a deserving family, several opinionated designers, and seven days, and you get “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition.” Each episode is a race against time to achieve a project that would normally take at least six months. A team of designers, contractors, and hundreds of volunteers work to rebuild an entire house in just one week. The result is life-changing... if it can be done in time. The show has helped dozens of families who provide safe and loving homes for children through foster care and adoption. Larry and Melissa Beach, high school sweethearts motivated by their love for children, opened their home to foster and adopt kids, especially those with disabilities. They have fostered over 85 children, while also adopting nine of the children along with their four biological children. When Hurricane Ike destroyed their home, they lived in FEMA trailers before the show intervened to help.

RHEA PERLMAN | 2010

Award-Winning American Actress



Rhea Perlman is a four-time Emmy Award winner for her work on the hit NBC sitcom “Cheers.” Perlman appeared in all 273 episodes and received an unprecedented 10 Emmy nominations and six Golden Globe nominations during the show’s 11 year run. In 1982, she married actor Danny DeVito, with whom she has three children: Lucy, Gracie and Jake. Perlman had earlier played DeVito’s love interest on “Taxi.” They later starred in the film adaptation of the Roald Dahl classic “Matilda,” which DeVito directed. Perlman is a longtime child advocate who has been outspoken about the need for reform in the foster care system in Los Angeles County. She has written special commentary for the Los Angeles Times and the Huffington Post about the failures of the child-welfare system in California. She has also advocated for the adoption of older children from foster care. She supports a variety of children's charities, including the Children's Action Network, Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, Childhood Diabetes Center, LA’s Best After School Programs, the Alliance for Children’s Rights, and the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for children of Los Angeles.



SEAN & LEIGH ANNE TUOHY | 2009

Sports Commentator and Restaurateur | Businesswoman and Interior Designer



Sean Tuohy, a New Orleans native, excelled in basketball, winning two Louisiana High School State Championships and earning the title of Louisiana's Mr. Basketball. He continued his success at the University of Mississippi, leading the team to its first SEC Basketball Championship and setting several SEC assist records. Drafted by the New Jersey Nets in 1982, he later became a SEC Basketball Legend and was named to the All Century Team in 2009. Sean co-founded RGT Management Inc. 22 years ago, serving as President and CEO, and operates over 70 Yum Brands restaurants across seven states. He also serves as a TV analyst for the NBA Memphis Grizzlies. His wife Leigh Anne, a Memphis native, owns Flair I, an interior design business, and has worked with notable clients. Their adoption story, featured in Michael Lewis' bestseller and movie "The Blindside," highlights their commitment to changing lives through adoption and inspiring others nationwide.

Al Roker | 2009

American Weathercaster and Journalist



As a host of NBC's "Today," Al Roker has the undivided attention of the nation every weekday morning as America prepares for work. His daily encounters with visitors from across America on the sidewalks outside Studio 1-A are a highlight of "Today." Al's on-air duties involve much more than the weather. As a co-host of "Today", he conducts interviews with celebrities, newsmakers and just average people from around the world and a wide variety of segments on every imaginable subject. Al is a nine-time Emmy winner who developed a continuing series for "Today" called "Today's Dad," featuring parenting tips for fathers. He is the host of many major NBC Network Specials, such as the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, the Christmas Tree Lighting at Rockefeller Center, and The Rose Bowl Parade. They are all extremely successful. Al has hosted his own talk show on CNBC, aptly titled, "Al Roker", and was the host of MSNBC's information quiz show, "Remember This?", which earned him a 1997 Daytime Emmy Award nomination for Outstanding Game Show Host, the only cable program up against the major network entries. Al Roker is an adoptive father and has three children.



JUDGE MICHAEL NASH | 2009

Executive Director at Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection



Judge Michael Nash was appointed to the Los Angeles Municipal Court in 1985 and elevated to the Superior Court in 1989, serving in the Juvenile Court since 1990. He has been Presiding or Supervising Judge of the Juvenile Dependency Court since 1995. Previously, he was a Deputy Attorney General in California, co-prosecuting the Hillside Strangler trial. Judge Nash has introduced numerous reforms to the juvenile courts in Los Angeles, including creating drug courts and psychotropic medication protocols. He also helped establish Adoption Saturday in 1998, leading to around 10,000 foster child adoptions in Los Angeles. This program has expanded nationwide with over 200 courts participating annually in National Adoption Day. Judge Nash serves as Treasurer of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and has received numerous recognitions, including National Judge of the Year by the National Court Appointed Special Advocates Association. He is married to Assistant City Attorney Patricia Clemens, and they have a daughter, Molly.

CBS | 2008

American Commercial Broadcast Television and Radio Network



CBS is deeply committed to raising adoption awareness through national broadcasts and local partnerships across its network. Shows like “The CBS Evening News with Katie Couric” and “The Early Show,” alongside CBS's owned stations, highlight stories that inspire families to adopt through annual specials like “A Home for the Holidays.” Celebrating its 10th anniversary, the special features celebrity introductions and musical performances, sharing heartwarming adoption stories that have helped thousands of children find loving homes. CBS stations like WBZ (Boston) and KCNC (Denver) feature segments like “Wednesday’s Child,” while others, such as WFOR (Miami) and KTVT (Dallas), support adoption through community partnerships. CBS’s commitment extends with dedicated adoption coverage on public affairs programs and through reporters like WCBS (New York)’s Cindy Hsu, herself an adoptive parent, who regularly shares adoption stories.



ASHLEY RHODES-COURTER | 2008

New York Times Best-Selling Author



Ashley Rhodes-Courter, born in North Carolina in 1985, experienced 14 foster care placements before being adopted at age 12 by Phil and Gay Courter of Crystal River, Florida. Graduating with honors from Eckerd College, she holds degrees in communications and drama with minors in political science and psychology. Active in community literacy projects and marketing, Ashley is dedicated to advocacy through roles like 2004 Youth Advocate of the Year for the North American Council on Adoptable Children. Her memoir, "Three Little Words," expanded from her New York Times Magazine essay and published by Simon & Schuster, has garnered national acclaim. Recognized for advocacy by organizations like Do Something and GLAMOUR Magazine, Ashley appears on national television and speaks nationwide to foster hope among children in care and promote adoption and permanency.

MARCUS SAMUELSSON | 2007

Ethiopian-Swedish Chef



Marcus Samuelsson's life has been shaped by his adoption and culinary achievements. Orphaned during a tuberculosis epidemic in Ethiopia in 1973, Samuelsson found refuge in Sweden, where he was adopted by a nurse and her husband. He gained culinary fame as the youngest chef to receive a three-star restaurant review from The New York Times in 1995. Recognized as "Best Chef: New York City" by the James Beard Foundation and honored as a "Rising Star Chef," Samuelsson co-owns Restaurant Aquavit, which has earned consecutive four-star ratings in Forbes' annual "All-Star Eateries" feature. His cookbook, "Aquavit and The New Scandinavian Cuisine," was released in 2003. Samuelsson is dedicated to philanthropy, serving as the spokesperson for a UNICEF partnership and supporting the Careers Through Culinary Arts Program (C-CAP), where he sits on the advisory board and serves as restaurant chairperson for their annual spring benefit.



ALONZO MOURNING | 2007 **American Former Basketball Center**



Alonzo Mourning graduated from Georgetown University in 1992 with a degree in sociology. After college, he was drafted by the Charlotte Hornets and later played for the Miami Heat and New Jersey Nets, ultimately leading the Heat to their first NBA Championship in the 2005-2006 season. A seven-time NBA All-Star and two-time Defensive Player of the Year, Mourning also represented the United States in the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia. Off the court, he is renowned for his advocacy for youth initiatives and foster care programs through his charitable organization, Alonzo Mourning Charities (AMC), Inc. Since 1997, AMC has raised over \$6 million for various children's development organizations and youth centers. Mourning's philanthropic efforts have earned him accolades such as the NBA Community Assist Award in 2006 and recognition from the National Urban League and NBA for outstanding community service and sportsmanship. He and his wife Tracy are actively involved in charitable programs and support organizations dedicated to improving lives.

PATTI LABELLE | 2007 **American Singer and Actress**



Belting out classic rhythm and blues renditions, pop standards and spiritual sonnets have created the unique platform of versatility that Ms. Patti is known and revered for. As she continues into her fourth decade of performing, the Philadelphia maven has returned to her roots with her latest project, The Gospel According to Patti LaBelle. "I was born gospel, so it's not like I'm coming back or trying to impress people with this new gospel project." In addition to her amazing entertainment career, Ms. LaBelle's work as a humanitarian is legendary. She has been active championing adoption, foster care, Big Sisters and the United Negro College Fund. While Ms. LaBelle's celebrated career is respected world-wide, she has also endured and survived personal strife. Within a 10-year period, she lost her mother, three sisters and best friend to diabetes and cancer. LaBelle herself was diagnosed with diabetes in 1994 and became a spokesperson for the American Diabetes Association. Ms. LaBelle is mom to five children: a biological son, an adopted son and daughter of her late sister Jackie, and later two neighborhood children. LaBelle and her children live in Philadelphia.



DUANTE CULPEPPER | 2006

American Former Minnesota Vikings Quarterback



Daunte Culpepper, an adoptee and adoptive parent, is dedicated to finding permanent homes for foster children of color and dispelling misconceptions about adopting African American boys by sharing his own adoption journey. Formerly with the Minnesota Vikings and now with the Miami Dolphins, Culpepper achieved NFL accolades including three Pro Bowl selections and leading his team to an NFC Championship Game. Raised by Emma Culpepper, who adopted him at one day old among her 15 foster children, Daunte attributes much of his success to her support. Following her example, he and his wife have adopted his nephew and advocate for foster and adopted children through charity work. Culpepper served as spokesperson for the African American Adoption Agency in Minnesota and continues to inspire as a role model in South Florida, emphasizing the importance of adoption and supporting children in need.

INVISIBLE CHILDREN | 2006

Peace-Building Organization



In spring 2003, Jason Russell, Bobby Bailey, and Laren Poole embarked on a filmmaking journey to Africa, where they uncovered a tragic reality: children abducted to serve as soldiers in Northern Uganda's long-standing conflict. Their documentary, "Invisible Children: Rough Cut," initially screened in 2004, grew from grassroots showings to national attention, including Oprah and CNN. The film has since impacted an estimated 1.5 million viewers, leading to the founding of Invisible Children, Inc. in September 2004. This nonprofit has mobilized global awareness and fundraising efforts through grassroots activism, advocating for policy change and supporting affected communities worldwide. Their vision aims to catalyze cultural and policy shifts to improve the lives of these invisible children, emphasizing the need for broader societal action and compassion.



DARRYL “DMC” MCDANIELS | 2006

American Rapper and Founding Member of Run-DMC

Hip hop legend Darryl “DMC” McDaniels, a multi-platinum recording artist of Run-DMC, discovered his adoption while writing his autobiography at age 35. His journey to uncover his roots and embrace his identity was featured on VH1 in October 2005, where he also collaborated with Sarah McLachlan on a rendition of “Cats in the Cradle,” resonating with adopted children everywhere. Beyond personal discovery, McDaniels co-founded Camp Felix in 2006 with casting director Sheila Jaffe, dedicated to nurturing children without parental support. Camp Felix aims to empower neglected youth with new opportunities, fostering their growth into resilient, successful adults. McDaniels’ advocacy transcends self-promotion, striving to instill hope and support for all children in need. His life’s work reflects a commitment to empower and uplift those facing similar challenges.



JARS OF CLAY | 2005

Christian Alternative Rock Band

Three-time Grammy Award-winning band Jars of Clay launched its career with the hit "Flood" in 1995. Since then, they have achieved over five million in career sales, 17 number one radio hits, an American Music Award nomination, and BMI honors for songwriting and performing. Jars of Clay is also renowned for their humanitarian efforts, described as “humanitarian aid workers posing as rock stars.” Their global advocacy includes work in China with Amnesty International and child abuse prevention in the U.S. In response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, band members Dan Haseltine, Stephen Mason, Matt Odmark, and Charlie Lowell founded the Blood Mission in 2002, providing clean blood and water solutions in sub-Saharan Africa. They are dedicated to raising awareness about the needs of HIV/AIDS-affected families, including orphans and vulnerable children. On tour, they engage with college students, youth pastors, and community leaders on social justice, vocation, and service. Bono, U2’s lead singer, praises them: “As a fan, I don’t think anyone has had a bigger voice than the activists in Jars of Clay.”





VICTORIA ROWELL | 2005

American Actress

Born in Portland, Maine, Victoria Rowell was raised in foster care for 18 years. Emmy-nominated, Rowell has been honored with ten NAACP Image Awards for her theatrical contributions. On the hit series *Diagnosis Murder*, she co-starred with Dick Van Dyke for eight seasons and wrote for the series, featuring issues of foster care and adoption. Sony Television has supported a foster care and adoption storyline, at Rowell's suggestion, on *The Young and the Restless*, which has received Congressional recognition. In 1990, Rowell founded The Rowell Foster Children's Positive Plan (RFCPP), offering services in fine arts, higher education, and healthcare. Rowell has been the National Spokesperson for the Annie E. Casey Foundation for four years and received the United Nations Association Award and an Honorary Doctorate in Humanities from the University of Southern Maine for her contributions to foster care and adoption.



SESAME WORKSHOP | 2005

American Educational Children's Television Series

Sesame Street is the most widely watched children's television series in the world and Sesame Workshop's longest-running show, with over 50 years in production. Debuting in 1969, Sesame Street was designed to help children aged two to five prepare for grade school. It stands out as the most thoroughly developed and researched preschool television program, focusing on cognitive, emotional, physical, and social development. Sesame Workshop, a nonprofit organization founded in 1968, creates research-based media to help children worldwide reach their highest potential. This includes television, radio, books, magazines, interactive web and computer software materials, and community outreach. Sesame Workshop has addressed issues like fear and loss following September 11, childhood obesity, lead poisoning, fire safety, language development, music education, financial literacy, and adoption. The Workshop has developed local adaptations of Sesame Street in 25 countries, including Russia, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, China, Spain, South Africa, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan.





LAURA BUSH | 2005

Former First Lady of the United States



Laura Bush was born on November 4, 1946, in Midland, Texas, and earned a bachelor of science degree in education from Southern Methodist University in 1968, followed by a master of library science degree from the University of Texas in 1973. Actively engaged in national and global issues, Mrs. Bush focuses on education, healthcare, and human rights. She annually promotes adoption during National Adoption Day ceremonies, emphasizing its transformative impact on children's lives. Leading President Bush's Helping America's Youth initiative, she addresses youth concerns nationwide, highlighting programs that deter risky behaviors. During her tenure, Mrs. Bush prioritized early childhood cognitive development, convening the Summit on Early Childhood Cognitive Development at the White House.

PAT & RUTH WILLIAMS | 2004

Co-Founder of The Orlando Magic NBA Team | Co-Author & Devoted Caregiver



Pat Williams is the Senior Vice President of the NBA's Orlando Magic. He is widely recognized in the world of sports as a promoter and excellent talent scout whose creative thinking and vision have played a significant role in the Magic's continued success since their first NBA season in 1989. Amazingly, he and his wife, Ruth, are the proud parents of 19 children, ranging in age from 11 to 25. Fourteen of his children are adopted, four are from South Korea, four from the Philippines, four from Brazil and two are from Romania. Pat takes every possible opportunity to speak about the importance of providing every child with a safe and loving home. Pat has authored several motivational books including, *How to Be Like Mike: Life Lessons from Basketball's Best*, *Nothing But Winners*, and *Ahead of the Game: The Pat Williams Story*. Together, Pat and Ruth co-authored *You've Got to Be Kidding*, a book about raising 19 children, and *How to Be Like Woman of Influence*. Highly sought after as a motivational and humorous speaker, Pat Williams kept a busy speaking schedule, addressing groups all over the world, until sadly passing away in 2024.



KIRK & CATHI TRIPLETT | 2004

Three-Time PGA Tour Champion Golfer | Registered Nurse

Kirk Triplett is a consistent top finisher on the PGA tour and a former member of the prestigious President's Cup National team. He and his wife, Cathi, have four children, two of whom were adopted from foster care: Conor Logan, Samuel Jacob, Alexis Marie, and Kobe Thomas. Kirk has partnered with the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption to use his platform on the PGA tour to raise awareness about adoption and the many children in need of safe and loving homes. While competing in PGA tournaments, Kirk carries a golf bag featuring children eligible for adoption from the U.S. foster care system, encouraging people to consider adoption. At each PGA tour stop, he holds a press conference to highlight the child featured on his bag. From their experience adopting two children, the Triplett family understands the financial burden that can prevent loving people from adopting. Therefore, they began a foundation to meet the financial needs of those desiring to adopt. Kirk and Cathi started Tour Fore Adoption in Scottsdale, AZ to provide grants to families who wish to adopt domestically but struggle with financial resources. Kirk and Cathi also support Chicks in Crisis, an organization that cares for pregnant women who are scared and unprepared for their pregnancy.



JANE SEYMOUR | 2004

Award-Winning British Actress

Jane Seymour, Emmy and Golden Globe Award-winning actress, devoted mother, and respected child advocate, has held numerous positions as a celebrity spokesperson, including ambassador for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and a member of the American Red Cross celebrity cabinet. She frequently raises awareness on maternal health, breastfeeding benefits, education for women and girls, and adoption. Jane hosted "Adoption," which aired nationally on Hallmark Channel, bringing the issue of adoption to the forefront by following the stories of parents-to-be preparing to adopt children domestically and internationally. She is also the National Ambassador for Childhelp USA, dedicated to the research, treatment, and prevention of child abuse. As a mother of six, Ms. Seymour has co-written a series of children's books with her husband James Keach called "This One and That One," based on her twin sons and their antics. A talented watercolor and sketch artist, she has donated her work to benefit several organizations.





MUHAMMAD & LONNIE ALI | 2003

American Professional Boxer and Activist | Vice Chair of the Muhammad Ali Center and Business Manager



Muhammad Ali, a three-time world heavyweight boxing champion, is also an adoptive parent. He and his wife, Lonnie, adopted their son domestically. Championing global causes, Muhammad has provided over 232 million meals to the hungry. He has delivered food and medical supplies to places like Harapan Kita Hospital in Jakarta, street children in Morocco, and Sister Beltran's orphanage for Liberian refugees in the Ivory Coast. Domestically, Muhammad has supported charities such as The Cradle adoption agency, the Make-A-Wish Foundation, Best Buddies, and Herbert E. Birch Services. In 2000, Muhammad helped launch the U.S. postage stamp celebrating adoption and participated in CBS's Home for the Holidays special to raise awareness about foster children. Lonnie, serving as Vice-Chair at the Muhammad Ali Center, assists in developing the Muhammad Ali Museum and Education Center in Louisville, Kentucky. The Center aims to foster tolerance and understanding among diverse communities. Muhammad sadly passed away in 2016.

BRUCE WILLIS | 2003

American Actor



Bruce Willis, the father of three daughters, is a lifelong advocate for children. President George W. Bush appointed him as the National Spokesman on Foster Care and Adoption. He uses his celebrity to support over 500,000 children in the U.S. foster care system. Alongside First Lady Laura Bush, Bruce launched the AdoptUsKids website, highlighting children available for adoption. To promote foster care adoption, he created public service announcements featuring stars like Jamie Foxx and the Charlie's Angels cast. Additionally, he donated a state-of-the-art recording studio to The Hip Hop Project at Art-Start, empowering at-risk urban youth. Bruce organized the Los Angeles premiere of "Rugrats Go Wild" to benefit foster care programs. In June, he traveled to Washington, D.C., for a press conference urging Congress to improve foster care. He also participated in National Adoption Day, finalizing over 1,400 adoptions of foster children.



HALLMARK CHANNEL | 2002

Media Company

Hallmark Channel, a 24-hour television network, delivers high-quality, family-friendly programming to a national audience of over 45 million subscribers. Globally, it is syndicated in more than 110 countries, reaching nearly 95 million viewers. The network's inaugural series, "Adoption," was its first original non-scripted reality program, showcasing the journeys of birth parents, adopted children, and adoptive parents. The series highlighted both domestic and international adoption stories. With "Adoption," Hallmark Channel launched its first national corporate outreach initiative, focusing on grassroots programs to boost adoption awareness in the U.S. This initiative offers customizable components, including promotions, public service announcements, and educational tools, to help communities highlight adoption stories. Lana Corbi, President and CEO of Crown Media United States, praised "Adoption" for embodying Hallmark's commitment to showcasing the love and sacrifices involved in adoption.



ANTWONE FISHER | 2002

New York Times Best-Selling Author, Director, Screen Writer

Antwone Fisher is a New York Times bestselling author, acclaimed screenwriter, devoted father, husband, and former foster child. His remarkable life story, marked by adversity and resilience, gained national recognition when he met producer Todd Black while working as a security guard on the Sony production lot. Inspired by Fisher's experiences, Black produced The Antwone Fisher Story, which portrays a young Navy man grappling with his painful past while seeking hope for the future. Born to an incarcerated single mother in Ohio, Fisher's life began in hardship. From birth, he was a ward of the state and grew up in a foster home that lacked the love and support he yearned for. Despite these challenges, support from a few caring adults had a profound impact. Today, Fisher is a sought-after screenwriter living in Los Angeles with his wife, Lanette, and daughter, Indigo. He has given a face to the countless children in the foster care system who long for a permanent, loving home.





DAVE THOMAS | 2001

American Businessman, Philanthropist, Fast-Food Tycoon



As an adoptee himself, Dave was a tremendous advocate for adoption and a hero to thousands of waiting children in the U.S. foster care system. In Dave's words, "Every child deserves a permanent home and loving family." In 1992, he established the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, which supported programs to make adoption easier and more affordable. Dave promoted adoption benefits for corporate and government employees, simplified the adoption process, and advocated for adoption tax credits for all adoptive parents. He spread his message nationwide, meeting with Members of Congress, corporate America, and the media. Dave and the foundation were instrumental in creating the U.S. postage stamp promoting adoption and the annual CBS television special "A Home for the Holidays." Both efforts raised adoption awareness across America and prompted thousands to inquire about waiting children. Dave's family, friends, and the foundation continue his work to ensure every child finds a forever family. Dave sadly passed in 2002.

JOHANNES VAN LOON | 2001

Former Secretary General of the Hague Conference on Private International Law



Johannes ("Hans") H.A. van Loon was the Secretary General of the Hague Conference on Private International Law from 1996 until 2013. The Hague Conference, an intergovernmental organization based in the Netherlands, comprises 54 member states, including the United States. During his tenure, van Loon was instrumental in initiating the work that led to the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption, signed in 1993. His efforts included persuading member and non-member states of the necessity and feasibility of a worldwide treaty on inter-country adoption. After the treaty's signing, he remained actively involved in its promotion and implementation, maintaining high-level contacts with governments and various organizations. Additionally, van Loon contributed to the development of other multilateral treaties and published extensively on private international law issues.



MARY BETH & STEVEN CURTIS CHAPMAN | 2001

Co-founder and Chairman of the Board of Show Hope | American Singer and Songwriter



Steven Curtis Chapman, a four-time Grammy award winner, sold over seven million albums, had thirty-seven number one singles, and received numerous Dove awards (Christian music's Grammy awards). Steven and his wife, Mary Beth, are both advocates for children in need. They have three biological children: Caleb, Will Franklin, and Emily. In March 2000, they adopted their daughter, Shaohannah, from China, which profoundly changed their lives. Inspired by their experience, they encouraged friends and family to consider adoption. In 2001, they returned to China to support friends and family in adopting children. Together, Steven and Mary Beth founded Shaohannah's Hope, a foundation to assist families with adoption costs. According to Steven, "Shaohannah's Hope is a fund to help aid families who want to adopt and have a place at their table and a place in their heart, but don't have a place in the bank account for it." Steven's album, "Declaration," includes a song dedicated to Shaohannah, entitled "When Love Takes You In."

ROSIE O'DONNELL | 2001

American Comedian and Television Producer



Rosie O'Donnell gained fame as the host and executive producer of the critically acclaimed "The Rosie O'Donnell Show," a nationally syndicated talk and variety series. Known for her diverse roles in film and theater, Rosie is also a prominent advocate for children. Her commitment to child welfare is exemplified by her creation of The For All Kids Foundation, which supports children's charities nationwide. In addition, Rosie used her platform to educate the public about adoption with her special "How to Adopt" show, sharing her personal adoption journey. She first became a mother in 1995 when she adopted her son, Parker, followed by her daughter, Chelsea, and son, Blake, in subsequent years. Rosie's advocacy has highlighted adoption as a viable and loving choice for building a family and has shone a light on the important role of birth mothers. Through her efforts, she has positively impacted all members of the adoption triad: birth parents, adoptive parents, and children.



CHILDREN'S ACTION NETWORK | 2000

Non-Profit Organization



Children's Action Network (CAN) is dedicated to leveraging the media to advocate for children's issues. The organization acts as a key resource for the entertainment industry on child welfare and collaborates with national advocacy groups to promote policies that benefit children. CAN is actively involved in raising awareness about adoption, with ongoing campaigns aimed at finding permanent homes for children in the foster care system. Their adoption-focused initiative, launched through the CBS special "A Home for the Holidays," continues to highlight the positive impact of adoption. CAN also sponsored a significant adoption event on Capitol Hill in June. Their previous successful campaigns include the National Immunization Campaign, which has achieved widespread immunization for children, and the Los Angeles Kids Cafes, which provide nutritious meals to thousands of children in need. CAN remains committed to advancing child welfare through strategic media partnerships and advocacy.

LYNETTE, GAIL & LARRY COLE | 2000

Director, Former Model, Former Miss USA | Former NFL Lineman & Super Bowl Champion



Gail and Larry Cole have dedicated their lives to caring for children in need. They have four children, including two biological and two adopted. Their commitment to adoption was profoundly demonstrated when they chose to leave behind their homes and careers in Michigan after facing racial discrimination in their adoption process. They sought a new environment where their children, Lynette and Sean, could find a permanent home free from such barriers. Their story of resilience and love has had a lasting impact. Lynette Cole, inspired by her parents' dedication, went on to win the title of Miss USA, using her platform to advocate for children in need. Over the past 15 years, the Coles have also fostered 127 young girls, continuing their mission to provide safe and loving environments for children. Their enduring efforts have made a significant difference in the lives of many children.



BERTHA HOLT | 2000

Co-Founder of Holt International Children's Services



Bertha Holt and her husband opened their hearts and home to eight children from Korea, profoundly influencing the adoption landscape. Her commitment to challenging the racial and national barriers surrounding adoption transformed the process in America. Mrs. Holt's courage and determination demonstrated that every child deserves a loving family, regardless of their background. Her efforts led to the adoption of hundreds of thousands of international children and reshaped perceptions of what constitutes an "unadoptable" child. Bertha Holt founded the organization that bears her name, dedicated to finding families for children in need. Her legacy is reflected in the countless lives she touched, including many disabled and orphaned children who experienced the power of love and family. Her impact is remembered fondly, with many considering her a beloved "Grandma" for her nurturing spirit and dedication to family. Her contributions continue to inspire the global adoption community. Holt sadly passed in 2000.

THE HONORABLE TOM BLILEY | 2000

Former United States Representative



U.S. Representative Tom Bliley, known for his influential roles in Congress and as Chairman, values his role as a father above all. Together with his wife, he adopted two children, a deeply personal experience that reshaped their lives. Understanding that adoption benefits both the child and the parent, Rep. Bliley has passionately advocated for adoption-related policies. He played a key role in founding the Congressional Coalition on Adoption in 1985, alongside U.S. Rep. James Oberstar and former Senators Gordon Humphrey and Lloyd Bentsen. Throughout his tenure, Rep. Bliley championed numerous initiatives to increase adoption awareness, including tax credits for adoption, family leave, and the establishment of the National Adoption Information Center. His efforts also extended to foster care incentives and support for orphans and displaced children. Rep. Bliley's leadership and dedication have left a lasting impact on the adoption community. Bliley sadly passed in 2023.



THE FREDDIE MAC FOUNDATION | 1999

Non-Profit Charity



The Freddie Mac Foundation, established in 1991, is a leading corporate philanthropist in the metropolitan Washington, DC area and is central to Freddie Mac's philanthropic efforts. The Foundation focuses on creating stable homes and fostering environments where vulnerable children and families can thrive. It invests in programs related to stable homes, foster care and adoption, and academic and career success. Notable programs include "Wednesday's Child" and J.C. Nalle Community School. "Wednesday's Child," an Emmy-nominated initiative, is part of a national campaign to boost foster child adoptions. Each week, the program features a foster child available for adoption on local evening news, resulting in over 1,400 adoptions and more than 42,000 inquiries from potential foster and adoptive parents seeking to provide loving homes. The Foundation's ongoing commitment continues to support the well-being and future of children in need.

At the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI), we deeply appreciate and celebrate the extraordinary contributions of our National Angels in Adoption. Their unwavering commitment to improving the lives of children in foster care and advocating for adoption embodies the very spirit of our mission. Through their remarkable efforts, they have transformed countless lives and highlighted the profound impact of family, love, and dedication. The Angels in Adoption program honors those who go above and beyond to ensure every child has a chance at a loving, permanent home. We are grateful for their passion, perseverance, and tireless advocacy, which continue to inspire and drive meaningful change in the world of adoption and child welfare.

CONGRESSIONAL COALITION ON ADOPTION INSTITUTE