



Mission Statement...

Because all children need families, the Adoption Exchange Association serves its members by stimulating innovative solutions, eliminating barriers, advocating, educating, and sharing excellent practice. Our central goal is to assist and encourage our members nationwide as they find adoptive families for all children and youth who wait in foster care.

AEA is proud to share with you our accomplishments for 2006. We appreciate your ongoing support of our mission and our programs. Much work has been done this year but, of course, much is left to be done. Approximately 114,000 American children continue in foster care waiting for a permanent family. 2006 was a good year for the Adoption Exchange Association in our service to children and families and we look forward to continuing our efforts in 2007!

Dixie van de Flier Davis, President, Board of Directors
Rachel A. Pratt, Chief Executive Officer

AEA STRATEGIC PLANNING...

Our Strategic Planning process began in earnest in February with a group of 20 AEA members meeting in San Antonio, Texas. Ironically, these dates were exactly 20 years from when AEA was originally incorporated: February 14, 1986. We came away from these two days feeling excited and renewed regarding the vision and direction for AEA in the coming years. Much appreciation is owed to all the participants. Committees were formed to work on various topics over the next months and we reconvened back in San Antonio at the AEA Biennial Conference September 12-13.

ALL TOGETHER NOW: VISION, LEADERSHIP & NEW BEGINNINGS...

All Together Now: Vision, Leadership & New Beginnings was the title and theme of the AEA conference, 2006. The first day was spent on the continuation of the strategic planning process for AEA with the expert assistance of Amanda Trosten Bloom, a Principal with the Corporation for Positive Change, who utilized the Appreciative Inquiry Method. This was a productive day with enthusiastic participation of about 60 attendees. We came away feeling excited about the direction of AEA going forward. One of the major accomplishments was the revamping of the organization's Mission Statement.

The second day was a more traditional conference format with workshops and speakers. AEA was delighted to be able to provide scholarships to the conference to representatives of a number of Exchanges around the country to cover their travel costs. AEA also presented two awards:



- **Lillian Lansberry Award** to Amy Anderson, caseworker, Region 1, Amarillo, Texas. Nominated by her peers in Texas, part of the nomination included: “Need someone to get’er done? Then Amy is the one. Amy never forgets the birthday of any child she is working with and always has a present for that child and a special visit. All the children on her caseload feel special because of the undivided attention she gives them. Amy is one of the best our agency has in the field.”
- **Wednesday’s Child Award** to SNAPS, Special Needs Adoptive Parent Services, Inc. in Boise, Idaho. All video submissions were reviewed by a committee from the Ad Council and SNAPS was chosen because “above all, the segment represented Holly’s desire to belong in a very respectful way, while delivering the message that speaks to other teenagers about resiliency, choice and holding on to something you ‘want more than anything.’” Marti Wisner, Executive Director, accepted the award on behalf of SNAPS and KIFI Local News 8, Idaho Falls, Idaho and especially Jay Hildebrandt, KIFI anchor who has not only been dedicated to airing and anchoring the Wednesday’s Child reports for over 20 years but also has been fostering youth and teens in his own home with his wife, Sally, for many years.

AEA MEMBERSHIP NEWS...

Instituted in June, 2004, this e-newsletter was produced weekly at the Baltimore AEA headquarters office and distributed to the AEA membership to keep them updated on AEA activities and share information and news about Exchanges around the country. We currently have 53 organizations as members.

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AEA WEBSITE—WWW.ADOPTEA.ORG

Plans for updating the AEA website are underway. A Website Committee was formed and began work on a web-site design that would better serve members and provide clear information about adoption and the organization's programs and services.

ADOPT AIR...

Unique to AEA, this program, established a decade ago, continued during 2006 to provide adoption-related transportation in partnership with Mercy Medical. All AEA member organizations are eligible to take advantage of this program to fly waiting children to meet prospective adoptive families (or vice versa). Because this program is underutilized, in 2007 AEA will be looking at reasons for underuse and determine possible changes to the program to increase use.

VOICE FOR ADOPTION...

AEA serves as a founding Board member for Voice For Adoption whose mission is "*Speaking out for our nation's forgotten Children.*"

PRESENTATIONS AT CONFERENCES...

AEA staff were out and about again this year providing workshops and keynote presentations at adoption and foster care conferences in many states around the country.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES...

The Collaboration to AdoptUsKids: On October 1, 2002, AEA entered into a five-year cooperative agreement with the Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, The Children's Bureau to manage this multi-faceted federal initiative. The primary purpose of AdoptUsKids is to recruit and retain families to foster and adopt the approximately 114,000 children waiting in our foster care system. We are delighted to report that during this year, 2006, based in large part on the partnerships we have forged with 205 collaborating organizations across the country, we were able to expand and enhance the services and activities of The Collaboration including:

National PSA Campaign

National Teen Media Campaign launched in June: in partnership with The Advertising Council and DHHS, AEA launched the first-ever national media campaign designed to interest individuals in coming forward to adopt or foster waiting teens. Building on our previous successful tagline of *You don't have to be perfect to be a perfect parent*, the Teen Campaign added *There are thousands of teens in foster care*

Thank you for creating such a funny, warm, entertaining campaign. My husband and I are currently looking to adopt and found the ads reassuring and cute. We love the hamster one! [M.E.]

who would love to put up with you! The Campaign features television, radio, and print Public Service Announcements. Media outlets around the country have donated airtime and print space to the effort.

More Awards! The original Adoption PSA media campaign won yet another award - a silver EFFIE award in April to recognize creative achievement in meeting and exceeding advertising objectives. In November, the campaign was honored to receive The Gold Bell award for Creative Excellence from The Advertising Council.

Spanish-language campaign Radio Tour: Ernesto Loperena, Vice President of AEA, participated in a radio media tour in April with interviews on Spanish-language stations around the country to give more information about our Spanish-language PSAs – the first of their kind in the country! Ernesto also represented the campaign in June on Dialogo de Costa a Costa, the Hispanic Information and Telecommunications Network.

Real Families Project: This year we continued to build on our established national network of parent spokesfamilies to represent AEA/AdoptUsKids in speaking with the media as requests come in. We call these the **Real Families** and appreciate their willingness to help and enthusiasm to talk about their adoptions from foster care.

Recruitment Response Teams Network: In order to provide enthusiastic and timely response to the interested individuals generated by our Campaign, AEA, in partnership with DHHS, established a national network of Recruitment Response Teams – one in every State and the District of Columbia during 2004. This is termed the “fulfillment” component of the Campaign and assists families to remain engaged in the adoption process. The RRTs continued their excellent work during 2006. They have responded to and assisted thousands of families to date. Also, the Fulfillment Support Committee, established in 2004, has continued its excellent work this year. Comprised of 10 RRTs to advise us and share ideas for improvement and enhancement, the Committee meets monthly and is a great asset! To encourage communication among our RRTs, a list-serv was established to share ideas, ask questions and help each other on the day-to-day operations.

In New York State, initially discouraged families have followed through on their interest in adopting rather than dropping out as a result of the information and encouragement from the RRT staff.

I don't know if you remember me but we spoke last year and I wanted to say thanks again for your support and knowledge! We are approved to adopt and are waiting to hear about a sibling group of four boys. Thanks again for all your help and friendly conversation.

Our website, www.adoptuskids.org: By the end of 2006, we had passed the 7,000 milestone! 7000 children who had been featured on the adoptuskids photolisting appeared there no longer as they had been adopted! AEA was able to reach this milestone due in large part to our partnership with the Northwest Adoption Resource Exchange in Seattle, WA which provides the daily maintenance and updating of our site and its ‘mirror’ site in Spanish, www.adoptel.org

I hope you know that your site is the best one I have found. Thank you is not enough to be said for bringing us the daughter that we always wanted. [the H. family]

Thanks for featuring D. on the adoptuskids.org home page. What a success! We had only received four inquiries previous to this all year. Now, I have received ten in the past week and already received five Home Studies. Great recruitment tool! [Lynn Strand, Adoption Recruiter, Oregon]

This website has allowed me to become a Mommy. I found my daughter on adoptuskids. Thanks again for allowing me to use this service. [JG]

Answering the Call Summit:

This year's Summit was in San Antonio, Texas August 3-4. This was the fourth AEA/AdoptUsKids Summit. It was focused this year on disaster preparedness and response in the wake of the Hurricanes. AEA was proud to present the annual Ellen W. Carey award to Starla Simmons, a Texas social work student.

We were honored to be with you all. Congratulations on a really well-organized conference. We enjoyed it, learned a lot, and heard many good things from others.

Great conference. It was really good to connect with people from the Gulf States. They've come miles and yet have miles to go. What a great group of people. I am proud to serve with them. [Sharen Ford, Colorado Department of Human Services]

The Summit was, as always, very informative. I only wish I could have split myself in half to attend twice as many presentations! [Izabel Bowers, Office of Social Services, Alaska]

National AdoptUsKids WorkGroup: Our outstanding group of adoption experts who comprise our National WorkGroup offered their time and expertise again this year with meetings in February and May.

Katrina: In early September 05, following the tragic events in our Gulf Coast due to the hurricanes, the Children's Bureau asked AEA to be a First Responder to reply to calls from people around the country seeking to help the children displaced by the storms. We received thousands of calls during a several week period and were proud to help in this way. Later, the Children's Bureau awarded an

Words cannot express how I feel about the gift you have given to my children and me. I thank you, thank you. Enclosed are letters of thanks from my children as well as pictures taken during our ordeal of Hurricane Katrina. I encourage you to keep up your good work. I know personally that most people do not realize how tough this situation is for foster and adoptive parents.

Thank you for the gift card because we really need that help because my mother couldn't do it herself so I just will say thank you, thank you so much and we will keep you in our prayers.

We thank you from the bottom of our heart. We really needed the help with the kids things and you all gave us some of the help we needed. We were able to get some clothing for the kids. We are glad someone cares.

additional grant to AEA in the amount of \$600,000 which we are using for Katrina-related response and relief. AEA immediately established Hurricane Response Teams in each of the five Gulf Coast States – Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas and provided funding to be disseminated to adoptive and foster families. We were able to serve over 200 families comprised of almost 800 children!

Training & Technical Assistance: through our partnership with The Adoption Exchange in Denver, AEA/AdoptUsKids delivers training and technical assistance activities on adoption and foster care related topics in locations around the country. A list-serv was established last year as a communication vehicle for our TTA consultant/trainers. The TTA department also hosted Regional Roundtables again this year in each of the federally designated regions.. Additionally, *T & TA e-notes* electronic newsletter was launched in May.

We look forward to continued teamwork with AdoptUsKids Training & Technical Assistance. It was a pleasure and a unique opportunity for us to learn important skills... that will be invaluable to us as we continue our work. [Linda Johns, State of Florida]

Mini Grants to Parent Organizations: We distributed 35 mini-grants to adoptive and foster parent organizations around the country to help in the wonderful work they do in nurturing and supporting the families who care for the children. Also, we held a two-day Parent Leadership Training in St. Louis in October in partnership with NACAC, North American Council on Adoptable

Thanks for disseminating so much helpful information to us. I wanted to take a moment to write you a quick note to update you about what this AdoptUsKids grant means to me and the families I serve. Thanks for giving me so many wonderful tools to work with and for the things you have made possible for families in Tennessee. [Mary Eva Merrell, Harmony Adoption & Tennessee Adoption Support Group]

A big part of our budget goes to offering a camping experience to foster, kinship and adoptive families throughout our region. I would like to thank AdoptUsKids for your contribution to this effort. Last year we had 230 people in attendance! [Doug Lewis, Midland County Foster Adoptive Network in Michigan]

A project we are working on is the creation of a Mentoring Program for waiting families. We were fortunate to receive a mini-grant from AdoptUsKids for this purpose. [Adoption Rhode Island]

Children, for all our new grantees.

National Adoption Month: AEA, as an annual sponsor of National Adoption Month each November, updated and distributed the annual ToolKit for professionals and parent organizations on how to maximize the interest in and media coverage of adoption during the month. We also partnered with the National Adoption Information Clearinghouse (NAIC) in the National Adoption Month website which utilized our AdoptUsKids Campaign slogan, Answering the Call: *You don't have to be perfect to be a perfect parent.* We were honored again this year to be mentioned by President Bush in his National Adoption Month Proclamation: “**....My administration is committed to helping place children with caring families. Through the Collaboration to AdoptUsKids project at adoptuskids.org, we are working to provide guidance and support for parents considering**

adoption....”

WEBSITE PARTNERSHIPS...

AEA entered into agreements with 17 States to host their photolisting sites on adoptuskids.org. All child cases registered on adoptuskids.org are automatically posted to pages that have the look and feel of each state’s website. The photolisting are delivered from adoptuskids.org servers.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION 2006

Revenue	Amount	%
Federal Grant	6,373,512	84.12
In-Kind Match from Cooperative Partners	1,028,523	13.57
Contributions	1,843	.02
Conference Program Fees	160,708	2.12
Dues from AEA Members	9,650	.13
Other	2,889	.04
Total	7,577,125	100

Expenses	Amount	%
AdoptUsKids Program Services	7,271,961	96.04
AEA Member Services	275,282	3.64
Management & General	24,516	.32
Total	7,571,759	100