



# Annual Report 2005

## Mission Statement...

The Adoption Exchange Association advances the availability and capability of Adoption Exchanges to carry out effective services to link waiting children with adopting families.

*Sharing resources so waiting children find families sooner!*

AEA is proud to share with you our accomplishments for 2005. 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 120,000 American children continue in foster care waiting for a permanent family. This has been a good year for the Adoption Exchange Association in our service to children and families and we look forward to continuing our efforts in 2006!

Barbara Holtan, Executive Director

Dixie van de flier Davis, President, Board of Directors

## 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 120,000 children waiting in our foster care system. We are delighted to report that during this year, 2005, based in large part on the partnerships we have forged with collaborating organizations across the country, we were able to expand and enhance the services and activities of The Collaboration including:

**National Spanish-Language Media Campaign launched:** in partnership with The Advertising Council and DHHS, on April 20 AEA launched the first-ever national Spanish-language media campaign designed to interest individuals in coming forward to adopt or foster waiting children. Entitled *Answering the Call*, the Campaign features television, radio, outdoor and print Public Service Announcements. Media outlets around the country have donated airtime or print space to the effort. We entered into a contract with New York Council on Adoptable Children to provide the response in Spanish to our special Adopte 1 call-in line and our [www.adopte1.org](http://www.adopte1.org). On May 4, we hosted a Congressional Briefing on Capitol Hill about the Spanish-language campaign. By the end of 2005, we had received inquiries from almost 4000 Spanish-dominant families!

*My boss and I both just love the ads. Very effective and quite moving!* Congressman Cardoza, Washington, DC

This represented Phase Two of our National Campaign. Phase One, the general language campaign had launched in 2004 and in early 2005, it won gold Addys – the highest award an advertising campaign can receive! Kathy Crosby, Vice President of the Ad Council noted, “This is simply spectacular and unprecedented – an amazing honor!” The Ad Council also reported that the campaign has received over 30 million dollars in donated media support to date.

*We love the AdoptUsKids program in Kentucky! The ads are so unique and make foster care adoption seem attainable by everyone, not just ‘super parents.’ Thanks for all that you do!*  
Caroline Crump

*KIRO Television in Washington was pleased to have been able to offer our support to [your campaign] by airing the public service announcement titled “Band” 19 times in the first quarter of 2005.*

**Real Families Project:** This year we established a national network of parent spokes-families 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 2005. They have responded to and assisted over 12,000 families to date. Our initial data show that the

*From a family in Connecticut who contacted the Baltimore AEA office and were referred to our CT RRT: I was contacted the next day by your RRT person in Connecticut who was both informative and enthusiastic. He gave me information and said he would send a packet which I received today. I am very impressed with the responses from your organization. My husband and I feel we are now on the right track to making adoption happen for our family and we are both very pleased. Dawn & Scott*

RRTs are retaining almost 25% of families who inquire. This number far exceeds what previous research had shown possible. Also, the Fulfillment Support Committee, established in 2004, comprised of 10 RRTs to advise

us and share ideas for improvement and enhancement, met monthly and proved to be a great asset! To encourage communication among our RRTs, a list-serv was established this year to share ideas, ask questions and help each other on the day-to-day operations.

*Families are realizing that they can contact the RRT with questions and concerns as they arise – that we will not leave them hanging after their initial inquiry. AdoptUsKids has made a significant difference in our recruitment efforts to have one central person available to answer inquiry calls for foster care and adoption. W.A., Vermont RRT*

**Our website:** [www.adoptuskids.org](http://www.adoptuskids.org) In August, we passed the 5,000 milestone: Over 5,000 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. The website folks also created a ‘mirror’ to adoptuskids.org for our Spanish campaign: [www.adopte1.org](http://www.adopte1.org)

*Thank you so much for your help. We are very excited to be part of your program! Your website is very user-friendly. Thank you for all the time and care you put into finding these beautiful children homes. Jaci*

*One of the first referrals from your website, adoptuskids.org, finalized their adoptions of a sibling group of boys, both over age 10 in February! B.N. New Mexico*

**Answering the Call Summit** – over 300 people attended the AdoptUsKids national Summit August 29-30 in Washington, DC hosted by AEA and DHHS, entitled *Permanency for All Children and Youth*. Due to the excellent work of our partner organization, Child Welfare League of American, the Summit was a rousing success! We were able to provide scholarships to the Summit for representatives of 15 Exchanges.

*I am so sorry that I had to miss the Summit. I heard from our newest Project Manager that it was a wonderfully energizing event; she learned a lot and connected with many people she’s worked with around the country. Sarah Greenblatt, Connecticut*

**National AdoptUsKids WorkGroup:** Our outstanding group of adoption experts who comprise our National WorkGroup offered their time and expertise again this year at our meetings in January, May and November.

**Katrina:** In early September, 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 additional grant to AEA in the amount of \$600,000 which we are using for Katrina-related response and relief.

*Wonderful job you did on the Heart Gallery. It was lovely and certainly looked like it was going to get some great publicity. Colleen Ellingson, Wisconsin, AEA Board*

**Heart Gallery:** The AdoptUsKids website became the central repository this year for information on Heart Galleries around the country. Following on the heels of this fortunate partnership,

on November 1, 2005 we hosted, along with the Children's Bureau, the first-ever National Heart Gallery with photo exhibits at Washington DC's beautiful and historic Union Station and at the Russell State Office Building rotunda on Capitol Hill. Through a committee selection process, the best portraits from Heart Galleries around the country were chosen to be part of the exhibit. We held a press conference in the morning and were gratified to have a number of dignitaries speak: Senator Mary Landrieu (Louisiana), Senator Larry Craig (Idaho), Congressman James Oberstar (Minnesota), Dr. Wade Horn, Assistant Secretary, ACF/DHHS, Mayor Anthony Williams, Washington DC, and others. We closed with a reception in the evening at Union Station for over 300 people and a performance by Randy Travis. A wonderful kick-off for National Adoption Month! It is estimated that 80,000 people per day walk through Union Station.

*I just wanted to drop you a note to congratulate you on the smashing success of the celebration in D.C. Obviously, a lot of work had gone into preparations and it showed! Joe Haynes, SC, AEA Board*

**Presentations at Conferences:** AEA Staff were out and about again this year providing workshops and keynote presentations at adoption and foster care conferences in Pennsylvania, Washington DC, California, Florida, New York, Texas, Missouri and many other places!

**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 this 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. The meetings focused on interjurisdictional child welfare issues since AEA was appointed lead on this issue by the Children's Bureau.

*Let me take this opportunity to thank you for the technical assistance from AdoptUsKids addressing recruitment with our local Tribes. The presenters were a wonderful team together and it is great to work with them. They provided excellent guidance at last week's planning session and I am looking forward to productive outcomes from the upcoming RoundTable. Angela Cause, Adoption Program Manager, State of Arizona.*

**Fostering Families Today:** AEA continued with our agreement this year with *Fostering Families Today* magazine. Each issue features four pages devoted to the activities and progress of the Collaboration.

**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 Children, for all our new grantees.

*Now that we've all returned from the AdoptUsKids Parent Leadership conference, I just wanted to take this time to commend you for such a wonderful training! It was well organized, the presentations were very informative and I think my notebook will become my second 'bible' since it is so jammed with excellent resources and ideas! I especially appreciated the time allowed to network and share with others via roundtables. This is a terrific format. I was so taken with the passion and commitment that all of you willingly shared with a sincerity that was breathtaking. The diversity of people, life experiences, backgrounds, professions and adoption/foster/kinship stories were astounding. With all the differences, we came together and voiced our common love for children.*  
Char Corbett, Connecticut.

**National Adoption Month** - AEA, as an annual sponsor of National Adoption Month each November, updated and distributed our 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.*

**On Tour with Steven Curtis Chapman** - during November and December, in partnership with Shaohannah's Hope Foundation, AEA provided adoptive families to join Mr. Chapman on stage in each of the 20 cities on his holiday tour. Our Recruitment Response Teams and Parent Groups were wonderful in getting the word out. We appreciate Mr. Chapman's strong support of adoption.

*We are thrilled that our three oldest kids have been asked to participate with renowned Christian contemporary artist, Steven Curtis Chapman, on Dec. 17 in Birmingham, AL. The kids are super excited! A.S.*

**AEA Membership News** – instituted in June, 2004, this e-newsletter is 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.

**AdoptAir** – Unique to AEA, this program, established a decade ago, continued during 2004 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).

**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.*”

**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 actually delivered from adoptuskids.org servers.

## AEA Financial Information 2005

Revenue	Amount	%
Federal Grant	5,508,229	98.06
Contributions	15,222	0.27
Dues & Program Fees	91,495	1.63
Other	2,329	0.04
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,617,275</b>	<b>100</b>

Expenses	Amount	%
Program	5,636,743	99.74
Management & General	14,641	0.26
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,651,384</b>	<b>100</b>