



Wisconsin
Adoption &
Permanency
Support

Summer 2021



Hello, and happy summer to you all! This quarter's newsletter brings you a wide variety of features, including a link to an article from a Wisconsin adult adoptee, a family story of foster care and adoption, and of course, upcoming program events and highlights with photos. I am hopeful that all of you have been able to get out and enjoy the warm weather and opportunities that summer brings. At our house, a new basketball hoop has been a highlight of the spring and summer for our boys, and has made for many good (and sweaty) memories so far. Within your summer planning, don't forget to check out our events near you (p. 3 & 6). You can also head to our website for the full event calendar at www.wisapsp.org/calendar – did

you know that just in the past quarter, WISAPSP offered over 50 different events either in-person or online?! Many of our family fun events have been filling up quickly, so I encourage you to check your family schedule and join us if you are able. For those of you who may not be able to join us in person, please don't forget about our virtual options such as the online support groups (p. 7) and Facebook groups (www.facebook.com/wisapsp/groups). There are many options available for all those impacted by adoption and guardianship.

I will draw attention to one very important item you may want to mark on your calendar, and that is the registration opening date for our "A Place In My Heart" Conference on Saturday, October 30th in Wisconsin Dells. We will be welcoming national speaker and author, Bryan Post. This year, we are so thrilled to be able to offer the earliest families to register with the opportunity for **one free hotel night** (your choice of either Friday or Saturday night) through the generous sponsorship of **Jockey**

Being Family. So mark your calendars, set your notification, and look forward with us to a wonderful weekend in the fall – registration for the conference opens at 9:00 am central on Monday, August 2nd at pimh2021.eventbrite.com. More details will be found within conference registration. I also encourage you to consider arranging for a trusted friend or family member to join you so that you can enjoy a day of learning while your children have a blast in the on-site waterpark. I am so looking forward to being there with you all.

Please have a safe and sun-filled summer, and we hope to see you soon!

Take care,

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WISAPSP SPRING NEWSLETTER CONTEST: Bright Spots of Quarantine

In our Spring Newsletter we announced a Facebook Contest to hear where families found joy during this last year throughout COVID. We received a lot of great responses! Check out the Dalebroux family!

*Our bright spot of spring was a trip to Florida for the Kids' spring break.
We spent countless hours in the pool and at the beach!*

The Dalebrouxs were randomly drawn from all the family submissions. They won a \$25 gift certificate. Watch for the next contest in an upcoming Facebook post! We love to hear what you are doing!



In Case You Missed It...

On Saturday May 22nd we had over 10 families explore everything the Urban Ecology Center on Milwaukee's East Side had to offer. The weather was



trained survivalist, Erin, led our group throughout different areas of the park and taught us many useful ways to endure nature's elements. We used our critical thinking skills to build shelter, learn how to survive

outdoors, and even got the chance to roast some yummy marshmallows over a fire. Each family that participated received a year-long family pass to the Urban Ecology Center as well. A wonderful prize after exploring the park! It was a warm, sunny day and we cannot think of a better way to have spent the afternoon.



beautiful, and we were excited to get outside and experience nature! Some families went on a scavenger hunt looking for different trees, plants, animals, and landmarks that could be found throughout the park. Several families found even more than their guide listed, including turtles, the striking Scarlet tanager bird, and a variety of different bugs. Other families went on an outdoor survival



In April, a parent's painting day event was hosted at Clay Corner Studio near Wausau. They had the back room to themselves and each person selected a design to make. They got to pick their colors and talk to the other moms who were there. It was such a fun way to



hike in a wooded area of the park. A

spend a Saturday afternoon connecting and having some kid free fun. We plan to host another one of these soon! Be sure to watch the event calendar!

The KINnect Family Crest Craft Event on May 27th was a great

event. Prior to the event, families received a box of craft supplies to make the crest and snacks. They also received an instructional video. We met via Zoom on May 27th, and families shared their masterpieces with the other families. Each family explained their symbols and how



they represented their families. One family said they are going to have a regular craft making night because they had so much fun doing it together as a family! Thanks to all those families who participated.



Visit our Eventbrite page to check out upcoming Activities!

Meet Staff Member - Jessica Wright



Get to know our Madison area Specialist...Jessica Wright

Hi, I'm Jessica, the support specialist in the Madison area. Here is a little bit about me...

What was your first job? I grew up in rural Illinois, so my first job was detasseling corn. That was also my hardest job!

Favorite place to visit? Lake Michigan, specifically the beach at Kohler- Andrae State Park. Our family goes camping there every year. It's a special place.

What's your favorite thing to do locally? Madison has some amazing farmer's markets. Walking to the Sunday farmer's market in my neighborhood is one of my favorite summer routines.

What are you reading right now? I have been on a Willa Cather kick, and recently finished O Pioneers! And I'm listening to the audiobook of A Promised Land by Barack Obama. Read by the author of course. **And watching?** The last thing I really enjoyed watching with my family is WandaVision- lots of Marvel fanatics in my family.

How do you like your eggs? Over-easy, please. On toast.

Got any phobias? I'm pretty scared of heights and I absolutely can't handle it when I see anyone leaning on a railing up high. Terrifying.

What's your favorite family tradition? Probably the annual excursion to cut down our Christmas tree. It's often freezing, it takes forever to agree on a tree, and when the kids were younger one of them always had a tantrum or refused to get out of the car. For some reason I still look forward to it every year!

Favorite part of your job? My favorite part of the job is connecting with the individuals and families in our WISAPSP community, especially at our in-person events. All the changes during the past year have made me really appreciate the beauty in connecting virtually as well.



Check out all of our Summer Activities. To learn more about each event or to register visit wisapsp.eventbrite.com. Below are in person events, but there are so many additional webinars and online opportunities listed in [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com). Be sure to check them out! Please RSVP for ALL events as notifications of any changes or cancellations will, in most cases, be sent to registrants only.

WI Community	Activity	Date	Location	Time	Cost
Fond du Lac	Coffee Chat	7/15/2021	Urban Fuel	11:00 am	Free
Mosinee	Berry Picking	7/17/2021	Lakeview Berry Farm	9:00 am	\$5
De Pere	Book Talk & Coffee	7/22/2021	The Exchange	9:00 am	Free
Eau Claire	Pool Party	7/23/2021	Fairfax Pool	7:00 pm	Free
East Troy	Railroad Event	7/25/2021	East Troy Railroad Museum	11:00 am	Free
Onalaska	Family Pool Day	7/31/2021	Onalaska Aquatic Center	9:30 am	\$5
Stevens Point	Parent's Night Out	8/5/2021	Arbuckles Eatery	5:30 pm	Free
Schofield	Pool Day	8/7/2021	Weston Aquatic Center	11:30 am	Free
Pewaukee	Trivia Night	8/14/2021	Park Ave Pizza Co	7:30 pm	Free
Milwaukee	Art & Nature Walking Tour	8/21/2021	Lynden Sculpture Garden	1:00 pm	Free
Oshkosh	Parent's Afternoon Out	9/19/2021	Paine Art Center & Gardens	2:00 pm	\$5

WISAPSP Family Highlight - The Jex Family

Could you tell us a bit about who makes up your family? Scott and I (Jenni), seven children (Brooklyn (14), Cassidy (12), Selah (10), Avonlea (8), Jubilee (7), Devin (6), and Khylee (4). We have a chocolate lab named Vivian. She is everyone's favorite!

What led your family to decide to foster children?

While I wanted to go the safe route and wait for a child nearing TPR, Scott felt that we should be open to regular foster care as well, offering support to a family needing help to reunify. I couldn't argue with that, so we opened up for both emergency and adoptive placements. Our first placement only stayed 24 hours, and then left to go live with a family member. After the emotional whirlwind of that experience, we then got the call for Jubilee and Devin. We were only open to girls because of bedroom arrangements, but Devin was so young he could stay in a room with girls for a few more years, and we anticipated they wouldn't stay long because it was an emergency removal. We almost said no, but after hearing his name was Devin, we had to say yes. Devin was our top boy name that we never got to use since we had all biological girls. It felt like a sign. The children remained in our home for 3.5 years before things moved towards adoption, and in that time, birth mom had another baby, and little Khylee joined our family a couple days after birth.

How has navigating openness with their family grown and evolved?

When the kids were first dropped off at our home, I was handed a post-it note with mom's name and phone number and told to call her to let her know her children were safe. I was so nervous and shocked that I had to call her! But talking together was so good for both of us. It helped us see the humanity of the other and begin our process of co-

parenting. The road was not easy. Mom did not trust the system and often took out her frustration on me. I grew very nervous to interact with her. But during TPR, she requested to meet me for coffee. I agreed as long as the social worker could be present. Our conversation was healing and unifying. She was able to share that she felt I was pushing her out of her role as mom, and I was able to communicate that I never intended that, but only wanted to parent together since we both loved the children with all our hearts. Since that time, we have become friends. While tensions arise, we are able to work through differing ideas with respect and boundaries. I am thankful that she continues to want to be a part of the kids lives, as that is healthy and healing for their hearts to know she always will love them and care for them. We get together several times a year so she can spend time with the kids, and it means the world to both of us that we can maneuver this relationship with mutual respect and care.

Mom's aunt fostered and then adopted our children's older brother, and she



became a tremendous support to me in navigating the relationship with birth mom. She had relational insight from their family history and was able to give me advice and direction on how to best communicate and handle sticky situations. This aunt has become a dear friend, and even though she lives many states away, we have remained close. In order for the kids to keep the connection they have with their older brother, we visited their home for a week vacation a couple years back, and they came up to visit us for Christmas



another year. Her friendship is a beautiful gift I have received from our foster journey.

What are some of the joys and challenges of raising a large family?

Most days I go to bed feeling like a failure because I cannot be the mother I wish I could be in my head. All of the children have so many needs, and when you add trauma and disabilities on top of the regular challenges, it feels overwhelming. But when I take a step back and look at our family, I see growth and love. Scott and I are learning trauma parenting techniques that are breathing life into our children and creating an environment of trust. We fail daily, but our kids are learning what it looks like to repair and reconnect. We are exhausted almost 100% of the time, but it is all worth it.

Several of our kids have a diagnosis that requires advocating, therapy, focused attention, medical appointments, outside services, etc. But even with the heavy load, I see our children caring for one another, pitching in to assist the little ones or do chores,

and in between the squabbles, I see their enjoyment of each other and how they are one another's best friends. The beauty of these things gives me hope in the midst of very difficult days. Honestly, I give all the glory to God. We couldn't sustain any of this without His strength and grace.

Thanks so much for sharing your story with us Jex family!

It's Time To Play!

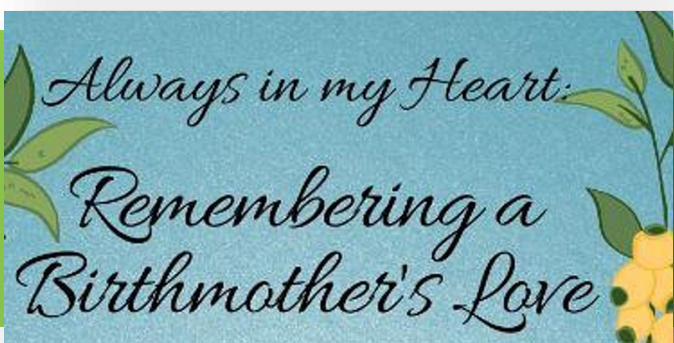
According to the Child Development Institute, playing with your children allows time to teach patience, problem solving, social skills, and creativity. This summer, get outside and make play a family event! Using items you likely have or can find inexpensively at your local dollar store, you can get outside as a family and play together!

For the more active child - create an outdoor obstacle course using pool noodles! You will need a variety of pool noodles, duct tape, yard stake (or a good stick), and a variety of sports balls. One way to use your supplies is to stick yard stakes in the

ground and place pool noodles in a semi circle shape on them to either jump over or climb under. Additionally, create an agility obstacle by taping several pool noodles in a circle and taping the circles together two at a time. The object is to run through the circles placed on the ground without disturbing them. You can also make a ring toss by using circle pool noodles tossed on standing ones! Don't have enough pool noodles to making into circles? Try making circles from glow sticks.

Lastly, create your own target by making a circle with a pool noodle and taping it to the ends of another two noodles. To make it interesting, make several targets! Use sticks or yard sticks to stand it up and take turns throwing a football or other sports ball in to see who has the best aim. See the pictures for examples of the suggestions here. Most of all, make the obstacle course your own. Involve your children in the design and most of all, have fun doing it!

Visit this link for more information: <https://www.parents.com/fun/activities/outdoor/pool-noodle-backyard-games/>



BIRTHMOTHER RETREAT - Always in My Heart: Remembering a Birthmother's Love

Connect with other Wisconsin Birthmothers

Saturday, October 2, 2021, 11 am - 3 pm

There is no charge for this event.

Glacier Canyon Conference Center at the Wilderness Resort

Feel free to bring along a support person.

This event is for anyone who has had a child placed for adoption, whether the placement was recent or long ago. Join us for a day of connection and support. Activities will be centered around a theme of healing and self-care and will also include some fun crafts like making essential oil roller balls and bath salts.

Lunch will be catered by Wilderness Resort.

Location: [Glacier Canyon Conference Center at the Wilderness Resort in Wisconsin Dells](#)

Event is hosted by Catholic Charities of Green Bay, La Crosse, Madison, and Milwaukee. [Register here on Eventbrite](#) OR by emailing OR calling Jen Layton: jlayton@ccmke.org or 414-771-2881 x 4167. **Registration deadline is 9/24/2021.** Any questions? Please contact Jen Layton.

THE WILDERNESS HOTEL
WISCONSIN DELLS, WI



"PARENTING FROM FEAR TO LOVE"

JOCKEY BEING FAMILY IS GENEROUSLY SPONSORING HOTEL NIGHTS (1/FAMILY) AND A SATURDAY NIGHT PIZZA PARTY!
VISIT THE EVENT PAGE FOR MORE DETAILS.



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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Wisconsin Department of
Children and Families

Check out other upcoming family fun events co-sponsored by Jockey Being Family!

Community	Activity	Date	Location	Time	Cost
Onalaska	Family Fun Day	7/10/2021	Clearwater Farm	1:00 pm	\$5
Wausau	Take Me Out to the Ball Game	7/17/2021	WI Woodchucks Baseball Club	5:00 pm	\$10
Eau Claire	Eau Claire Express Game	7/17/2021	Carson Park	6:30 pm	Free
Marshall	Fun at Little Amerricka Amusement Park	7/25/2021	Little Amerricka	11:45 am	\$5
Green Bay	Family Fun	8/21/2021	Bay Beach	10:00 am	Free
Duluth, MN	Pizza Train	8/21/2021	North Shore Scenic Railroad	6:00 pm	\$5-\$10
Milwaukee	Family Boat Tour	9/4/2021	Edelweiss Cruises & Boat Tours	10:30 am	Free
Mount Horeb	Horses & Nature	9/25/2021	Snapdragon Farm	9 am—noon, 1—4 pm	\$25

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Virtual Support Groups

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WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US FOR ONE OF OUR ONGOING VIRTUAL GROUPS THAT MEET REGULARLY VIA ZOOM!

***CLICK ON EVENT TITLES TO REGISTER OR FOR MORE DETAILS
OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE***

[Parents of Older Youth & Teens](#) - Join other adoptive & guardianship caregivers with children in middle/upper grades for a live, video check-in to socially connect and discuss topics related to adoption.

[Trauma Informed Parenting](#) - This is for WI adoptive, kinship and guardianship caregivers who are parenting youth with a high level of need due to complex trauma histories.

[Birth Parent Support](#) - An online support group for individuals who placed a child for adoption. This is a wonderful way to connect with others with a shared experience.

[Waiting to Adopt](#) - A space for Wisconsin parents or parents-to-be that are awaiting the adoption or placement of their child to connect with one another, ask questions and to share concerns and excitement.

[KINnect Relative Caregivers](#)—Morning - Please join us for an online group for relative caregivers across Wisconsin. We will share the daily joys and challenges of being a relative caregiver of children.

[KINnect Relative Caregivers](#)—Evening - A monthly virtual support group for relative caregivers in Wisconsin. Please join us for this opportunity to connect with other parents and grandparents as a way to share the joys and challenges of being a relative caregiver of children.

[Single Parent Support](#) - An online support group for single adoptive and guardianship parents. This group will meet via Zoom on the 4th Tuesday of every month and will be facilitated by Heather Hansen. Join the conversation!

[Adult Adoptees](#) - Connect with other adult adoptees from around Wisconsin. This will be a space for discussing your adoption experiences with others who "get it", as well as for just getting to know one another and talking about life. This group is facilitated by an adult adoptee.

[Sibling Group Support](#) - An online support group for siblings of blended families also part of an adoption or foster placement for a live, video group session to socially connect and discuss topics related to challenges that arise in these family dynamics.

[Adoption Triad Sharing Circle](#) - An online support group for all members of the adoption triad, including birth parents, adopted adults, and adoptive parents, to come together in a safe, confidential, and welcoming space to share their stories.

[Coffee Talk for Adoptive, Guardianship and Foster Parents](#) - Grab your coffee and join us for a relaxed morning (virtual) chat with other adoptive, foster, and guardianship parents to connect and feel supported. This is an informal group with no set agenda.

[Foster Parent Connections](#) - Join other foster parents for a live, video check-in to socially connect and discuss topics related to foster care.

Get connected! Call or text us 24/7 at 1-833-WIS-APSP

Adult Adoptee Voices—David Bohl










We are so honored this quarter to share an article from a Wisconsin adoptee, and one of our regional advisory board members, David Bohl. David shared this piece of his story recently with [This Adoptee Life](#), and has graciously agreed for us to share it with all of you through this newsletter. To read the article in its entirety, as well as more content from David, just click on “continue reading” or visit his blog at davidbbohl.com. David, we thank you for being willing to share your story.

I've been two people my entire life. I don't have a dissociative personality disorder—I'm just a regular guy whose reality is that I am a relinquishee and adoptee, and a person in long-term recovery from alcoholism. In the past my perception was so warped I had to occupy a few Parallel Universes: worlds that collided with each other, but that were also able to contain a person made out of two people. Until I made those worlds connect and interlock, living a split existence almost killed me: I was terrified of confronting my reality; its darkness. ...[continue reading](#)



The Wisconsin Adoption & Permanency Support Staff are available to assist you! Please feel free to contact them if you are interested in an event, have a creative event idea, or would love to learn more about local resources. They are here to serve you and your family! They would love to hear from you!

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	Lydia Deering	Eau Claire & Surrounding Area and Far Northern Region	lydia@wisapsp.org	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 1
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	Susan McParker	La Crosse & Surrounding Area	susan@wisapsp.org	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 3
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