



Winter 2021-2022



Hello, and a warm welcome to those who may be reading our newsletter for the first time! As of late, I find myself thinking a lot about connection. I continue to hear people talking of how much these past couple of years have ignited their desire to reconnect with the people they care deeply about. This idea of connection is one we can all relate to. Recently, I've reconnected with one of my dearest college friends, and I have been reminded of just how impactful it is to feel known, with very little need for words. As we listen to adult adoptees, we hear a similar, deep desire for connection and to be known, as well as to know oneself. In the 2008 documentary "Adopted," an adult adoptee tells her adoptive mother, "You will actually get *more* of me if you can imagine that I was connected to someone else." Adoptees at our live online panel in November shared how impactful of an experience it can be to see someone who looks like them, to be in the presence of a relative or someone who cared for them at an early age, or to learn more information about themselves that was previously unknown to them. Reread that short list - these things

are not just impactful for adoptees, but it is easy to forget about the silent impact these things have on us if we consistently have access to them.

If you are an adoptive or guardianship parent, I encourage you to find new ways to support connections for your children (and for yourself) this year. It may look like connecting our children with their own identities through sharing information and knowledge, honoring and supporting connections with birth/first families with a true spirit of openness, or connecting together through playfulness and a renewed appreciation of being in their lives and in their presence.

In that same spirit, I invite you to also consider how you might use some of our program's opportunities to foster the connections in your children's lives. For those of you with contact with birth/first families, we would be honored to be a part of a new tradition that brings your WHOLE family together for something special and memorable for everyone. Please know that any of our family fun events are open for birth/first family members to join in on, and we encourage you to come out together! Some folks have been asking how to

find out about our events as early as possible (some do fill up quickly) – and I will tell you that one secret is to follow us not just on Facebook but to also follow our Eventbrite page, which hosts all of our event registrations and can send you a notification the moment a new event opens for registration. You can follow that by visiting wisapsp.eventbrite.com and clicking "Follow." We are working on making sure a few spots are always saved for first time attendees too, so watch for that as well. We hope to see you very soon.

To a new year,

Christy Reppe
Adoption & Permanency Support
Coordinator
christy@wisapsp.org
608-519-8057



Check out all the fun!



The **Madison Office** held their **roller skating and pizza party** at Fast Forward Skate Center in Madison. We rented the entire rink for the evening on Thursday, October 21st. Sixteen families attended with kids ranging in age from infants to teenagers. It was so great seeing so many familiar faces. We also had a quiet room for families who needed a break from skating.



In early fall we collaborated with [Natural Wisdom Counseling](#) for a **Connecting with Horses and Nature** event at beautiful Snapdragon Farm in Mount Horeb. Thanks to generous funding from [Jockey Being Family](#), fifteen families were able to enjoy a morning



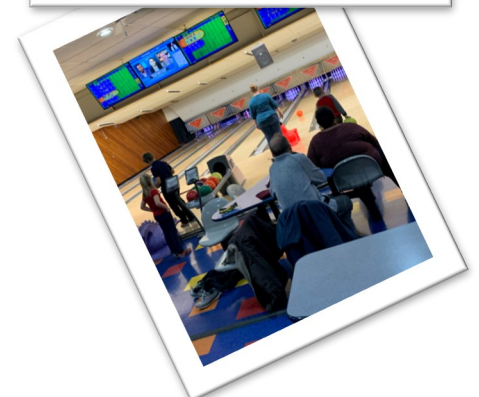
or afternoon on the farm. Families spent time with the horses, trekked all over the farm on a nature scavenger hunt, and got messy doing some sensory-themed crafts. We loved meeting all the wonderful horse and nature-loving families who came out to the farm that day!



WISAPSP's was pleased to join members of Eastbrook Church for an important parent education event on **October 20th**. Adoption therapist: Jaclyn Skalnik shared several research-based practices to effectively support transracially adopted children. Our evening was very enlightening, and we wish to thank Eastbrook Church for the opportunity to collaborate on this event.



In Recognition of National Adoption Month, many of our families joined staff across the state as local groups hosted Family Bowling Night! Thanks to all who participated.



Did you miss the fun? Don't worry, new activities are around the corner. Check them out at www.wisapsp.org.

SAVE THE DATES

Wisconsin Adoption & Permanency Support
Spring Conference:

10 Parenting Skills An Adoptee Wants Parents to Know and Therapeutic
Interventions for Parents

April 22, 2022
9 am - 3 pm

St. Norbert College
De Pere



Speaker:

Jeanette Yoffe has been in the field for over 20 years. She has worked as a psychotherapist, supervisor, foster care social worker, and is the clinical director of Yoffe Therapy Inc. She has trained social workers and therapists in trauma-informed practice for the Los Angeles County Child and Family Services and the Department of Mental Health. She is also the founder of Celia Center, a non-profit organization supporting all members in the adoption constellation.



Winter
Newsletter



Contest:
Holiday
Traditions



Hello everyone! It's hard to believe we're now into 2022! I hope you enjoyed your holiday celebrations! For our Winter Contest, share with us your favorite family holiday tradition. Submit your answer by February 1st to Chelsey@wisapsp.org or on the corresponding Facebook contest post. We'll choose one of your submissions at random to receive a \$25 amazon gift card. Photos are encouraged as well! We can't wait to hear all about your family's unique and fun traditions.



SAVE THE DATE!

WISAPSP Spring Conference:
Northwest Region



featuring
Cam Lee Small

Friday, May 13, 2022

9:30am - 2:30pm

Altoona, WI





Family Fun Winter Activity

What Is Geocaching?

What is Geocaching?

Geocaching is the world's largest treasure hunting game. Over 3 million cleverly hidden containers called geocaches are hidden all over the world just waiting to be found.

Here is how to get started with your family:

Download and open the Geocaching App (it's free!).
<https://www.geocaching.com/play>

Select a Geocache in area you would like to go on the map and head to that location.

Once you navigate to the location, look at the recent activity and the hint for clues. Geocaches come in all shapes and sizes, so be sure to know what size container you are looking for! [pic of geocache screen]

Now it's time for your family to start looking...the Geocache can be anywhere within 30 feet or so of the GPS location. You could find it on the ground, in a tree, or next to other parts of the landscape (such as a fence or

sign). For most Geocaches, you won't need to dig or climb. It will be something you can grab without issue, although it is usually out of sight, so Muggles don't see it. (Muggle is a term taken from Harry Potter to describe non-Geocachers in the area).

Hurray! Once you find it, sign the log, and claim it on your app! A big smiley face will appear over the cache you found for a job well done.

A commonly asked question for bigger containers is: What are all these items in the container? Well, some containers have tokens that other Geocachers have left behind for you to take if you want. It's a way to say hello to a fellow Geocaching friend. Usually if you take something, you leave something in its place, but feel free to do what you like.

The best part is that Geocaching is an activity that can be done outside all year-round whenever works for you! And, because there



are so many Geocaches everywhere, you don't have to travel far to find one. If you have more questions, Christy Timm, a WISAPSP specialist, has been Geocaching for years all over the country. She would love to go more in-depth with questions or to see any successful caching finds! Please email her at christyt@wisapsp.org

Article submitted by Christy Timm, a WISAPSP Support Specialist in our Milwaukee area office.



The Wisconsin Adoption and Permanency Support Program has created a [new informational video](#). Check it out and learn more about all of the resources we have available. Do you know of someone who may benefit from our services? Be sure to share and let us know what you think!

WISAPSP Family Highlight - The Bensend Family



This winter, we are excited to feature the Bensend Family! They live in Dunn County, Wisconsin. The adoptive family is made up of parents: Abe and Stephanie and children: Hannah

time with extended family, and adventuring/exploring new places.

The Bensend family agreed that if they could travel anywhere in the world, they would like to visit Alaska! The family has attended several events in the WISAPSP Northwest Region in 2021, but the kids voted their favorite was the pool party at Fairfax Pool in Eau Claire.

The Bensend Family's advice to

adoptive families, "It is so refreshing to have friends who can relate to your struggles and joys, and it is healthy for the kids to have friends who can relate to them as well." Their last words of advice are, "Keep up the hard work, it is so worth it!"

Thanks for letting us learn more about you, Bensend Family!

*...do your best to make fun memories
as the years go by so quickly.*

(10), Lydia (9), Gracelynn (7), Maria (5), and Noah (5). The Bensend family enjoys camping, hayrides on the farm, boating, playing board games, spending

other adoptive families is to "do your best to make fun memories" as the "years go by so quickly." They encourage families to build relationships with other foster or



Meet the Staff - Heather Hansen

Heather Hansen is the Support Specialist for the NE Region, with her office being in Green Bay. She has worked as a specialist for

WISAPSP for 2 ½ years and prior to that, worked for the Post Adoption Resource Center for 7 ½ years.

Here's a little bit about her...

What was your first job?

My first job was Burger King...it was actually a fun job as a teenager and I met people that I'm still friends with today!

Do you have any children?

I do! I have three children...two girls and a boy. I'm also hosting

an exchange student, so for the school year, I have an Italian daughter too.

How about pets?

I have two Boxer dogs, Gypsy and Boston. We also have a tortoise and two hermit crabs.

What is your dream vacation?

I have so many places I'd like to visit in Europe...Ireland, Czech Republic, Greece, Italy,

England...I would love to do a month in Europe, visiting multiple countries.

What are you reading right now?

The Lost Apothecary by Sarah Penner

What states have you lived in?

Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois have stayed in the Midwest my whole life.

Favorite part of the job?

I enjoy many things about my job, but the best would have to be interacting with the families at our events. I love meeting the families in person and interacting with everyone in a fun environment.





Check out all of our Winter 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://wisapsp.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.

Remember-Please follow COVID-19 safety procedures. Facemasks must continue to be worn at all personally attended events.

WI Community	Activity	Date	Location	Time	Cost
Milwaukee	Hockey Night	1/12/2022	Panther Arena	7:00pm	Free
Eau Claire	Tax Tips	1/13/2022	Catholic Charities	6:30pm	Free
La Crosse	Night at Museum	1/21/2022	Children's Museum	6:00pm	\$5
Onalaska	Trauma Reactions	1/26/2022	Public Library	6:00pm	\$5
Black Earth	Night at Museum	1/27/2022	Children's Museum	5:00pm	\$5
Wausau	Tubing	1/30/2022	Sylvan Hill Park	1:30pm	\$2
La Crosse	Adoptee Dinner	2/2/2022	Big Al's	6:30pm	Free
Kewaunee	Sledding	2/3/2022	Winter Park	5:00pm	Free
Burlington	Coffee/Conversation	2/10/2022	Coffee House	10:00am	Free
Middleton	Parents Night Out	2/28/2022	Board and Brush	6:00pm	\$15
Stevens Point	Coffee Meet Up	3/5/2022	Ruby Coffee Roasters	9:30am	Free
La Crosse	Parents Night Out	3/23/2022	Fiesta Mexicana	6:00pm	Free
Wausau	State Park Day	3/26/2022	Rib Mountain	12:00pm	\$5
De Pere	Book Chat and Coffee	Multiple Dates	The Exchange	9:00am	Free



Have you [liked us on FACEBOOK yet](#)? If not, here are some of the items you may have missed! Contests! Articles! Support Groups!

- [How To Survive This Holiday Season](#)
- [Library of printable and clickable website resources](#)
- [Navigate technology with your children](#)
- [How To Search For Identity, Family, And Belonging On The Adoption Journey](#)

So many other articles and helpful resources are available through Facebook!



**[FOLLOW US TODAY on
FACEBOOK.COM/WISAPSP/](https://facebook.com/wisapsp/)**



Virtual Support Groups

WWW.WISAPSP.ORG



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

[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.

[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 other 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.

[Coffee Talk for Adoptive and Guardianship Parents](#) - Grab your coffee and join us for a relaxed morning (virtual) chat with other adoptive 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.



To find out more about the program or determine eligibility, give us a call at our toll-free number or fill out our [First Step Form](#).

Giving Incredible Families Tools for Success

The GIFTS Program is our short-term, support program for post-adoptive or guardianship families with a higher level of need to support permanency. It is a strengths-focused, trauma-informed program. If a family is determined to be eligible for the program, a GIFTS Case Manager will work closely with that family to assist in:

- Finding resources
- Navigating cross-system needs
- Identifying family strengths and goals
- Offering consistent support and advocacy



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!

Staff Name	Service Area	Email	Phone
 Lydia Deering	Eau Claire & Surrounding Area and Far Northern Region	lydia@wisapsp.org	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 1
 Heather Hansen	Green Bay & Surrounding Area	heather@wisapsp.org	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 2
 Breanna Halling	La Crosse and Surrounding Area	breanna@wisapsp.org	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 3
 Jessica Wright	Madison & Surrounding Area	jessica@wisapsp.org	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 4
 Judi Hoang	Madison & Surrounding Area	judi@wisapsp.org	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 4
 Pattie Godsell	Milwaukee & Surrounding Area	pattie@wisapsp.org	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 5
 Christy Timm	Milwaukee & Surrounding Area	christyt@wisapsp.org	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 5
 Chelsey Zommers	Wausau & Surrounding Area	chelsey@wisapsp.org	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 6

THANK YOU SUSAN MCPARKER!

We would like to extend a HUGE heartfelt “thank you” and best of luck to Susan McParker, who has accepted a position in guidance counseling and will be back working face-to-face with students in the La Crosse area. Susan has been with us for over two years and has been a wonderful presence in the coulee region of our state. You may have also gotten to know Susan through one of the virtual groups she facilitated for parents of older youth or for foster parents. We know those of you who have had the opportunity to work with her will miss her calming presence and wisdom. We will certainly miss her on the WISAPSP team, but we are excited for the difference she will make for the families and students she will serve in her new position. Thank you for everything Susan!