



Wisconsin  
Adoption &  
Permanency  
Support

Spring 2022



Hello and welcome to the spring edition of our 2022 newsletter! I hope the warmer temperatures lift your spirits as we come into a new season.

This quarter, I'd like to draw your attention to the opportunities we have for birth parents to find support through WISAPSP. But first, a quick word about the language we use: we recognize that "birth" family is not a preferred term by all, as some feel it minimizes their role to only the birth of the child. Some prefer the term "biological," "first family/parent," "family of origin," or others. This is not an easy discussion with a simple answer. I encourage you to consider the impact of the words you choose, and to lean in and listen carefully to those who are connected to you and your family to determine what is best for you. At this time, "birth parent" remains the term most often used/identified by someone seeking support in this area. Within our program, we will continue to look to those groups such as our support groups for guidance on how they would like their group to be identified. So for now, you will see the term birth parent. We are committed to the process of listening to those who are involved and evolving over time.

No matter the circumstances or level of openness in an adoption, we know that adoptees are forever connected to their families of origin. Connection and relationships are more complex than what we may have words for, so let's keep the conversation going.

It is with much gratitude that I get to share with you the following notes/quotes you will see on the next page from some of those who have attended our online or in-person birth parent support group. A sincere thank you to each one of you – you create the space for one another to be seen and supported. I'd also like to recognize two of our staff, Karla and Jessica, who do a phenomenal job facilitating these groups with such warmth and care. It is really such an honor to have the chance to provide these opportunities.

You will see all sorts of wonderful events in this newsletter, happening all across the state as well as online. If you are considering attending one of the fun in-person family events and have the opportunity to invite birth/first family to join you in creating some memories, we would be honored to support you in that

and welcome you to do so.

One last note – for those of you with a high school graduate who is also an adoptee this spring, we are so excited to announce a wonderful new graduate opportunity for them to receive a graduation gift from WISAPSP and Jockey Being Family, which includes a \$25 gift card! Find more information in this newsletter, and watch for more info in an email and on our Facebook page!

We hope to see or hear from you soon,

Christy Reppe  
Adoption & Permanency  
Support Coordinator  
[christy@wisapsp.org](mailto:christy@wisapsp.org)  
608-519-8057





# Birth Parent Quotes



Check out what our birth parents have to say about our [In-Person](#) and [Virtual Birth Parent Support Group](#)! The support group is for parents who have placed a child for adoption. The groups are facilitated by Karla Meyer out of our Eau Claire office (in-person and virtual) and Jessica Wright out of our Madison office (virtual). Please share this information with a birth/first parent who may be interested in attending.

*"Participating in the birth parent support group has changed my life significantly. This group is safe, kind and supportive. That has helped me to heal some deep wounds and accept myself as I am, birth parent and all. Courage to expand my life grew out of that. Connecting with other birth parents has helped me to realize that there are many out in the world. I didn't feel so alone with the pain and loss, and that helped my healing also. I feel happy and hopeful about the future knowing that I can participate in a gathering where the others understand what it can mean to be a birth parent, accept all the complexities that go along with it, and have supporters as we each move forward in life's journey."*

*"Thank you for making this online birth parent group available! It's been a wonderful way to connect with other's who have a shared experience. I appreciate you taking the time to make this available for all of us!"*

*"I'm grateful for the Virtual Birth Parent Support Group. It's been helpful to be able to share and compare thoughts and feelings with other people who've experienced similar emotions and feel understood. Thank you!"*

*"I can't say enough about how this group has helped me. The facilitators are all wonderful and it has meant so much for me to meet others in my same situation. Speaking out loud of my experience has helped me through my grieving process which for me has been long and extremely difficult. I highly recommend if only to listen to others. I have found this to be my best therapy. I'm so grateful! Thank you all!"*

*In 13 years, I had never knowingly met another birth mom. This group changed that for me. It has allowed me to talk to others that, simply put, just get what I am going through and I am forever thankful."*

*"I would say the best part about going to birth mother support groups is simply being with other birth moms. Since for many of us it's not a part of ourselves we often share in our day-to-day lives, just being in a room (even virtually) with other birth moms is pretty awesome! Its comforting and also just impressive to know that there are really so many of us out there. And another birth mom is the only person who has even the slightest understanding about what it's really like. So for me, overall, it's just the camaraderie of being with those who've been through what I've been through."*

*"Meeting other birthparents has definitely changed my life, made me more confident, self aware, more of an advocate for myself and others."*



## Check out all the fun!



In late January, families in central Wisconsin gathered to partake in **Sledding at Sylvan Hill Park in Wausau**. The weather was absolutely perfect and it was so much fun to watch the families interact!



Eleven parents came out for **Parents Night Out at Board & Brush: Middleton** on February 28th. Everyone seemed to really enjoy getting away for a few hours of painting and socializing. The Board and Brush experience provided some much-needed time to relax and focus on a project, while chatting with a new acquaintance or an old friend. It was a good night!



The SE Milwaukee WISAPSP's Office held a **Fused Glass Parent/Child Workshop** for adoptive and guardianship families at the Creative Studio in Waterford this February. We had a wonderful time working with colored glass to make beautiful designs and everyone made something different. We were quite impressed with the art people created!



Did you miss the fun? Don't worry, new activities are around the corner. Check them out at [www.wisapsp.org](http://www.wisapsp.org).



# Self-Care for Adoptive, Foster, and Kinship Parents

We hear it. We say it. But do we do it? When you are a parent of a child who has experienced trauma, it might not be your habit to practice self-care. Yet. But we hope to challenge you a little bit today. We suggest that self-care for adoptive, foster, and kinship parents is a priority that you cannot and should not neglect.

All parents need times to recharge, refuel and rest – and those times can be tricky to coordinate in a typical, busy home. However, when you are parenting a child with challenging behaviors rooted in trauma, abuse, or neglect, building in “me time” can feel selfish. Some might even say indulgent or maybe even logistically impossible.

## “I Think I’m Too Busy for Self-Care.”

Suppose your child has learning disabilities, medical needs, or emotional or mental health struggles. In that case, we know your calendar is already filled to the brim with tutoring, therapies, specialist appointments, IEP meetings, and caseworker visits. Maybe you are fostering or an open adoption. Then you also have to consider birth family visits – sometimes complicated further by the network of your child’s extended birth family.

In addition to the full calendar that most adoptive, foster, and kinship parents juggle, you are likely also monitoring your child’s educational progress. It might be summer enrichment work right now, which can feel manageable. However, homework battles consume your weekday afternoons during the rest of the year. Daily, you also balance your child’s emotional and mental health, whether it’s fall-out from early trauma, lagging skills, or developmental delays. Phew. You are, indeed, quite busy. However, with all that is on your plate, you need to take care of yourself to take care of your family.

## The Barriers to Self-Care Are Mostly In Your Head.

Adoptive, foster, and kinship

parents frequently tell us that they “can’t” schedule self-care into their family calendar. We would posit that many of the reasons you object to self-care are actually messages you tell yourself or messages that you’ve internalized as true, consciously or unconsciously.

These internalized messages don’t just keep you busy, they keep you from taking care of yourself.

## I’m a Care Giver, Not a Care Receiver.

It’s uncomfortable to be on the receiving end of nurture and care when you are accustomed to being the caregiver. When our identity is wrapped up in giving care, it’s hard to see that we deserve nurture.

## I Asked for This Life.

We understand that you chose this path and that you might have received the message – or spoken the message to yourself – that you don’t have room to complain about the weight of it because you asked for this. Wherever you might have picked up this message, it hangs out in your brain when you feel tempted to reach out for help or support and shouts you down.

## I Don’t Have it So Bad.

It’s easy to look around and compare your hectic, busy life to others’ circumstances. When you have a naturally caregiving bent, it’s easier to decide that you can make it through. Even when you are barely muddling through, it’s okay because your life is not nearly as hard as Jane’s.

## I Don’t Even Know What I Need.

We also get the lack of clarity you might feel about what it is that you actually need. When you are overwhelmed, sleep-deprived, and depleted mentally and emotionally, it’s a challenge to think through what will help you the most. Scheduling a routine appointment for your own rest seems out of reach.

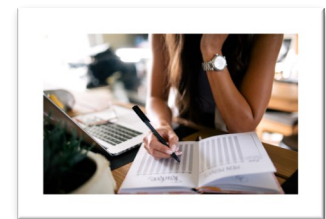
Trust us – some of these barriers are in our minds, too. The mental, emotional, and physical labor of caring for an adopted, foster, or

kinship child is weighty. These barriers feel insurmountable — unless you get some help and guidance to get you over or through them.

## Practical Tips to Overcome Those Barriers and Start Self-Care.

We are offering these practical tips to help you identify and re-write the messages you tell yourself about why you don’t need self-care. Your challenge is to pick one or two of these tips to start new messaging and new habits. This list is inspired by the recent [Creating a Family.org](https://www.creatingafamily.org/podcast/taking-care-of-yourself-when-parenting-harder-to-parent-kids) podcast, [Taking Care of Yourself When Parenting Harder to Parent Kids](https://www.creatingafamily.org/podcast/taking-care-of-yourself-when-parenting-harder-to-parent-kids).

- **Give Yourself Permission.**
- **Say “No” More Often.**
- **Establish a Routine.**
- **Pick One Thing.**
- **It’s GOOD to Start Small!**
- **Ask for the Help You Need.**
- **Teach Yourself to ACCEPT the Help.**



## Self-Care is an Investment in Your Whole Family.

Parenting adoptive, foster or kinship kids who need so much of us is challenging, rewarding, and consuming. When we invest the time and intentionality in taking care of ourselves – body, mind, and spirit – we are modeling for them how to be healthy. We are giving them the best versions of ourselves that they — and we — deserve.

This article reprinted with permission from [Creating a Family](https://www.creatingafamily.org).





# Spring Newsletter Contest: Family Garden

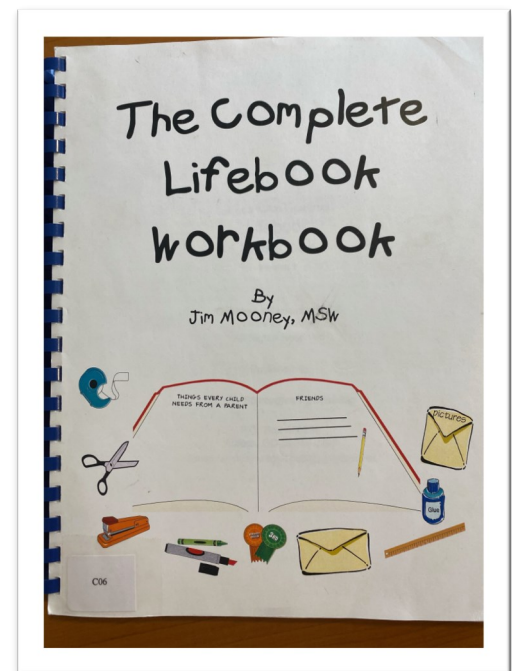


Hello everyone! Spring brings longer days, warmer weather and planning and planting gardens! For our Spring Contest, we are asking you to share your plans or pictures of your 2022 family garden. Show us your unique gardening ideas! Your family may decide to grow a container garden in a small space, plan a garden plot, or perhaps create a lovely hanging garden, or plan a balcony garden or even a green rooftop garden! We would love to see and hear your ideas! Submit your garden plans by June 30th on the corresponding Facebook contest post. We'll choose one of your submissions at random to receive a \$25 Amazon gift card. Hand drawn pictures, pictures of seed packets, or your garden space would be great! We can't wait to hear and see everything about your family's gardening plans.



## Parent/Child Activity: Creating a Lifebook

Have you created a Lifebook with your child yet? If not, it is never too late. Often our kids have unanswered questions about their birth families, their culture of origin, their parents' past, and their own identity. Creating a Lifebook is a great activity parents and kids can work on together. It is a great opportunity to open the dialogue about what your child is thinking and what questions they may have. A Lifebook is a tangible way for your child to make sense of their story. It can help answer the question "Who am I?" Even if kids don't have answers, it is okay for them to create their own story. Lifebooks can be created from scratch, or you can look at books with templates. Please visit our [Lending Library](#) for books or visit this website for more information: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/adopt-parenting/lifebooks/>.



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

## WISAPSP Family Highlight - The Neveau Family



Meet the Neveau Family. They have three biological children, Kyle (37) married to Julia, Adam (35) married to Annie, and they have two children, Roux (8) and Stanley (6), and Megan (31). They started doing Foster Care when Megan was twelve. They adopted Ryan (31) who is now married to Brittany, and they have three children Aiden (3), Bentley (2) and Edith (2 months), and his

sister Tiffany (30) who is now married to Jessica. They then adopted Cherity (15) when she was two, and then fostered a sibling group of three who were 7, 6 and 4 at the time. They were adopted 9 months later and are Jackson (19), Elizabeth (18), and Lily (17). Along came Katelyn (10) who was adopted at age one. Patrick (28) entered their lives as an adult who aged out of foster care, and they adopted him as an adult at age 22. In between the family additions, they have fostered 55+ children.

For fun, they enjoy spending time together and love to go camping in Baraboo, WI. They also play board games, go bowling, go to movies and just hangout.

Past WISAPSP events they loved attending were ice skating, Packers Family Night and picnics.

Advice they have for adoptive families....not every child fits, it is like finding pieces to a huge puzzle. You love and take care of each one of them. If the child becomes available for adoption you will know if it is a good fit, if not you have helped a child on a journey to find their forever home and be proud of that.

*Thanks for letting us get to know you better Neveau Family!*



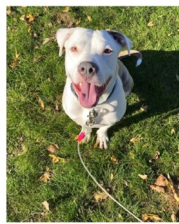
### Meet the Staff - Breanna Halling

Breanna Halling is the Support Specialist for the La Crosse area and is also an Adoption Social Worker at Catholic Charities when she

is not working for WISAPSP. She attended Viterbo University and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Social Work and a Minor in Family Studies.

Before working at WISAPSP, Breanna worked at the Parenting Place part-time and was in school full-time. She worked at Pleasuring Seasoning, her family's business. She also worked with at-risk youth for the YMCA for 3 years and has been babysitting since she was 12.

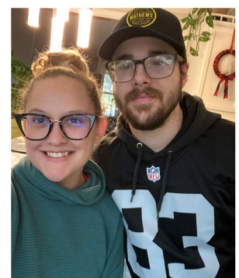
Her hobbies include sewing quilts in her free time, Harry Potter, playing with her dog Mack and two cats, Salem and Brutus, and reading and spending time with her family.



an older brother who would be 28 and two younger siblings, Rae who is 8 and Bryant who is 6.



When Breanna was 13, she was the youngest person to receive the Jefferson Award for public service.







Northeast Region  
Speaker  
**Jeanette Yoffe**

Friday, April 22, 2022  
9 am – 3 pm  
*St. Norbert College  
De Pere, Wisconsin*

For more details and to register visit:  
[www.northeastspringconference.eventbrite.com](http://www.northeastspringconference.eventbrite.com)



Wisconsin  
Adoption &  
Permanency  
Support

SPRING CONFERENCES



Northwest Region  
Speaker  
**Cam Lee Small**

Friday, May 13, 2022  
9:30 am – 2:30 pm  
*The Fish House  
Altoona, Wisconsin*

For more details and to register visit:  
[www.northwestspringconference.eventbrite.com](http://www.northwestspringconference.eventbrite.com)



JOCKEY BEING FAMILY AND WISAPSP WANT TO SAY  
"CONGRATULATIONS" WITH A FREE GIFT!

**WHO IS ELIGIBLE?**

- ADOPTED YOUTH RESIDING IN WISCONSIN
- GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL IN 2022
- PARENT MUST REGISTER THEIR GRADUATE BY APRIL 23RD
- GRADUATE MUST ATTEND A ZOOM CHECK-IN SESSION BY APRIL 30TH

**WHAT EACH GRADUATE WILL RECEIVE**

- GRADUATION CARD & FRAMEABLE PRINT
- CORRESPONDING BRACELET
- \$25 TARGET GIFT CARD

\*Those who choose to attend an additional (optional, 1-hr) Adoptee Graduate Zoom support group will also receive a free copy of Cam Lee Small's digital "Workbook for Adoptees."



Wisconsin  
Adoption &  
Permanency  
Support

22GRAD.EVENTBRITE.COM



JOCKEY  
BEING FAMILY.



Check out all of our Spring Activities! To learn more about each event or to register visit [wisapsp.eventbrite.com](https://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.

WI Community	Activity	Date	Location	Time	Cost
Eau Claire	<a href="#">Parents Night Out</a>	4/9/2022	Board & Brush	1:30 pm	\$20
Waukesha	<a href="#">Morning Meet Up</a>	4/14/2022	Dave's Family Restaurant	10:00 am	Free
De Pere	<a href="#">Spring Conference</a>	4/22/2022	St. Norbert College	9:00 am	\$10
La Crosse	<a href="#">Family Fun</a>	5/7/2022	Performance Elite Gymnastics	1:00 pm	\$3
Altoona	<a href="#">Spring Conference</a>	5/13/2022	Fish House	9:30 am	\$25
La Crosse	<a href="#">Adult Adoptee Lunch</a>	5/13/2022	Java Vino	11:00 am	Free
Wauwatosa	<a href="#">Coffee Meet-Up</a>	5/19/2022	Colectivo	10:00 am	Free
Geneva Lake	<a href="#">Fishing Lessons</a>	5/31/2022	Geneva Lake Conservancy	9:00 am	Free
Wausau	<a href="#">Playground Fun</a>	6/4/2022	JoJo's Jungle	10:00 am	Free
Eagle	<a href="#">Adventure at Old World</a>	6/15/2022	Old World Wisconsin	10:00 am	Free
Port Washington	<a href="#">Tour &amp; Picnic</a>	6/18/2022	Port Washington Lighthouse	11:00 am	Free
Waupaca	<a href="#">Mini Golf Fun</a>	6/20/2022	Tom Thumb Mini Golf	5:30 pm	Free
Eau Claire	<a href="#">Birth Parent Get Together</a>	Multiple Dates	Catholic Charities	6:00 pm	Free
McFarland	<a href="#">Playdates at the Park</a>	Multiple Dates	McDaniel Park	10:00 am	Free



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

Appleton	<a href="#">Timber Rattlers Game</a>	5/22/2022	Timber Rattlers Stadium	1:10pm	Free
Jefferson	<a href="#">Dairy Breakfast</a>	6/4/2022	Jefferson Co Fair Park	8:00am	Free
Mondovi	<a href="#">Family Burger Night</a>	6/5/2022	Together Farms	5:00 pm	\$2
Madison	<a href="#">A Night at the Ballpark</a>	6/8/2022	Warner Park	6:00pm	\$2
La Crosse	<a href="#">Pool Party</a>	6/19/2022	Onalaska Aquatic Center	5:30 pm	Free
Wausau	<a href="#">Baseball Game Fun</a>	6/25/2022	Woodchucks Baseball Club	5:00pm	\$10





# 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](#) and [Evening](#) - 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.

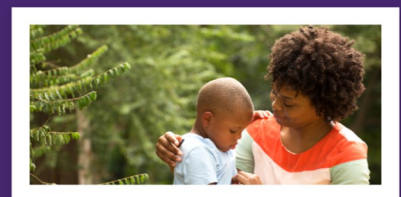
[Single Parent Support](#) - An online support group for single adoptive and guardianship parents. This group will meet via Zoom on the 4th Tuesday of every other month and will be facilitated by Heather Hansen. Join the conversation!

[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.





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	<a href="mailto:lydia@wisapsp.org">lydia@wisapsp.org</a>	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 1
 Heather Hansen	Green Bay & Surrounding Area	<a href="mailto:heather@wisapsp.org">heather@wisapsp.org</a>	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 2
 Breanna Halling	La Crosse and Surrounding Area	<a href="mailto:breanna@wisapsp.org">breanna@wisapsp.org</a>	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 3
 Jessica Wright	Madison & Surrounding Area	<a href="mailto:jessica@wisapsp.org">jessica@wisapsp.org</a>	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 4
 Judi Hoang	Madison & Surrounding Area	<a href="mailto:judi@wisapsp.org">judi@wisapsp.org</a>	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 4
 Pattie Godsell	Milwaukee & Surrounding Area	<a href="mailto:pattie@wisapsp.org">pattie@wisapsp.org</a>	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 5
 Christy Timm	Milwaukee & Surrounding Area	<a href="mailto:christyt@wisapsp.org">christyt@wisapsp.org</a>	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 5
 Chelsey Zommers	Wausau & Surrounding Area	<a href="mailto:chelsey@wisapsp.org">chelsey@wisapsp.org</a>	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 6

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