



Wisconsin
Adoption &
Permanency
Support



SPRING 2023 NEWSLETTER

Hello and Happy Spring!

I will never tire of the feeling of spring on the horizon. In fact, I am sure I have begun to sound like a broken record about it every April. I love the warmth that comes with the sunshine and lingers long on the thawing ground. For many of us (especially those of us who prefer to hibernate a bit in the winters), it brings with it a renewed energy to get outside and enjoy being in nature again. My planner has begun to fill up with family activities and events happening in the spring and summer, and it's exciting to look ahead to those.

As you'll see in this newsletter, we have many exciting things happening here too. Kicking things off very soon at the end of April and into May, we have **Spring Conferences** in **four different locations** (De Pere, Pewaukee, Eau Claire, and Minocqua) with **four amazing speakers** (Barb Clark, Lori Holden, Dr. Samantha Wilson, and Jessica Sinarski)! You will likely find one near you, or you could enjoy a little roadtrip to see one of the speakers in another region. If you do attend, I would love to meet you in person! Please stop and introduce yourself! You can find all of the conference details along with registration at wisapsp.eventbrite.com.

PUBLISHED APRIL 1, 2023

In addition to the Spring Conferences, we have many other wonderful opportunities for family fun and connection as well. Though many are here in the newsletter, there are even more listed on our Eventbrite page. I encourage you to check out our **"Collections" page** there where events are categorized into locations and types.

In program news, I do want to make you all aware of an upcoming transition for post-adoption and post-guardianship related services funded by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. In July, the current WISAPSP contract and Foster Care & Adoption Resource Center (FCARC) contract will be brought together under new contracts for one statewide center and several regional centers titled the Wisconsin Family Connections Centers. We will be sure to communicate with you all on more details when those are available, and you will automatically be transferred to the email list for that programming. Of most importance, please know that there will continue to be supports, trainings, and family fun opportunities for you and your family.

I hope to see you this spring!



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



respite providers needed



Lutheran Social Services Public Adoption Program is looking for caring adults to provide weekend and short-term respite for children of all ages with varying needs. If you enjoy spending time with children and can provide a safe and caring environment for them, you are needed! A stipend is provided to help cover any costs.

Please contact Beth Schultz at 920-740-8704 or beth.schultz@lsswis.org for additional information.



Wisconsin Department of
Children and Families

The Wisconsin Adoption & Permanency Support is funded by a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families.



Wisconsin
Adoption &
Permanency
Support

2023 SPRING CONFERENCES

DE PERE, WI

APRIL
21

"TRYING DIFFERENTLY RATHER THAN HARDER"

WITH SPEAKER BARB CLARK

St. Norbert College

Friday, April 21, 2023 from 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM

PEWAUKEE, WI

*"FROM FEAR TO FEARLESS: BECOMING THE
PARENT YOUR CHILD NEEDS YOU TO BE"*

WITH SPEAKER LORI HOLDEN

The Ingleside Hotel

Saturday, April 29, 2023 from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM

APRIL
29

EAU CLAIRE, WI

MAY
5

"WHEN DIFFICULT BEHAVIORS ARISE"

WITH SPEAKER DR. SAMANTHA WILSON

Dove Healthcare Community Room

Friday, May 5, 2023 from 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM

MINOCQUA, WI

*"HELP, HOPE, AND HEALING FOR THE
ADOPTIVE AND FOSTER FAMILY"*

WITH SPEAKER JESSICA SINARSKI

The Waters of Minocqua

Saturday, May 20, 2023 from 10:00 AM to 3:30 PM

MAY
20

REGISTRATION AVAILABLE AT WWW.WISAPSP.EVENTBRITE.COM



CLICK ON ANY
PICTURE OR
EVENT TITLE TO
GO TO THE
EVENTBRITE
WEBPAGE!

Upcoming Events

Parent Walk & Talk at the Wood Painting Night for Adoptive & Guardianship Parents: Wausau April 18, 2023



Come out and join WISAPSP for a wood painting night! We will meet at 6:00PM at Clay Corner Studio! They will walk us through how to make a design of your choice that you get to take home! Please register on Eventbrite by Monday, April 10th as spots are limited.

Playdate at the Park for Adoptive and Guardianship Families: McFarland May 19, 2023

Adoptive and guardianship moms and dads, please meet us at the park for some coffee and conversation while the kids play. We'll supply the coffee, juice boxes, and donuts! McDaniel Park is a hidden gem, located on the edge of Lake Waubesa. Register on Eventbrite to join!



Family Day at the Farm - sponsored by Jockey Being Family: Mount Horeb May 21, 2023



Come spend the morning or afternoon connecting with nature and horses and find out how this can be a way to strengthen connection. You will have the opportunity to experience hands-on games, activities, and art projects that will support communication, empathy, deepening relationships, and a sense of community. Horse activities will include brushing, grooming, and possibly leading. (The day will not include riding horses.) Register on Eventbrite to join!

This is a just a sample of all the opportunities for events in your area.
For a full listing of events in your region, visit wisapsp.eventbrite.com.

Adoptee Support

Adoptee Day at the Farm: Mount Horeb

June 11, 2023

Adult adoptees, come spend the day connecting with nature and horses and find out how this can be a way to strengthen connection. You will have the opportunity to experience hands-on activities and art projects that will support communication, empathy, deepening relationships, and a sense of community. Horse activities will include brushing, grooming, and possibly leading. Register on Eventbrite to join!



[HTTPS://ADOPTTEEDAYATTHEFARM.EVENTBRITE.COM](https://adopteedayatthefarm.eventbrite.com)

Adult Adoptee Meet-Up at Blum Coffee Garden: Greenfield



THURSDAY, MAY 25 AT 4:00PM

Please join us at Blum Coffee Garden for an afternoon of coffee and conversation! This event is casual and intended for adult adoptees to connect with other adult adoptees. The first \$10 in coffee and food is on us! Feel free to bring a resource or any questions you need input or advice on if you would like.

If you have any questions or need accommodations please reach out to Christy at christy@wisapsp.org.

VISIT [HTTPS://ADULTADOPTTEEMEETUPGREENFIELD.EVENTBRITE.COM](https://adultadopteemeetupgreenfield.eventbrite.com) TO REGISTER.

ONGOING VIRTUAL ADULT ADOPTTEE SUPPORT GROUP

Connect with other adult adoptees from around Wisconsin in 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.

Find out more about the group at www.wiadoptee.eventbrite.com

THE STAFF BEHIND WISAPSP



Chelsey Zommers
WAUSAU OFFICE

Meet Chelsey! She is the Adoption and Permanency Support Specialist in the Wausau office. Chelsey promotes and coordinates activities for foster, adoption, and guardianship families, as well as helps connect families to community resources. Chelsey's favorite thing about the role, is finding and supporting families who feel like no one else understands their family dynamic, or they feel like they don't know where to turn for support. Finding even just one resource or support group to connect them with can make such a big impact in their life. Chelsey also likes planning and finding self-care activities for caregivers.

Chelsey grew up in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin and is an only child. Chelsey has three children, and loves to watch them grow and learn, and see their developing personalities. Chelsey received her B.A in Psychology and has always loved learning about the connection between brain function and behavior in individuals and groups, which has strong applications to her current role! When she isn't working, Chelsey is spending time with her children or working out. She enjoys summer the most, where she can take her children to parks, waterparks, and hiking trails. She also has a passion for fitness. She does FIRE camps and competes in fitness challenges like DEKA strong and "The Murph" that is done on Memorial Day each year in remembrance of Lieutenant Michael Murphy for the United States Navy SEALs.

Chelsey hopes to go back to school to become an SLP (speech language pathologist) that implements sensory strategies, mainly working with children with autism. Her life goal is to open her own non-profit: a therapy center for children and teens with big behaviors/autism that utilizes a family focused approach. Therapy and services would be available for parents and children, along with their siblings. Her vision is to make it completely affordable and accessible to all families. We hope her dream comes true!

Next time you see her, give Chelsey a big thanks for her work in the Wausau area!

Birth Parent Resources



On March 14th WISAPSP hosted a very special edition of the virtual Birth Parent Support Group -- Adult adoptees from our virtual Adult Adoptee Group were invited to attend as special guests. Our goal was to provide an opportunity for birth parents and adult adoptees to hear different perspectives and learn from one another, especially given that not all birth parents are in contact with their child and not all adoptees have their birth parents in their lives. A total of thirteen birth parents and adult adoptees attended the virtual gathering.

Participants had a chance to share their stories, ask each other questions and hear new perspectives. Feedback from attendees has been overwhelmingly positive, with each group finding it helpful to hear from the other. WISAPSP looks forward to hosting similar opportunities in the future!

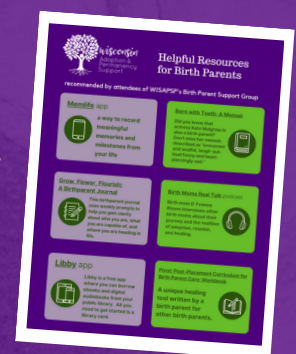
ONGOING BIRTH PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS

WISAPSP hosts both a virtual and in-person birth parent support group. These groups are open to all birth parents who have had a child placed for adoption, no matter what type of adoption or agency involved. Come ask your questions and meet others who share a similar story. It does not matter how long ago you placed.

Find out more about the virtual group at
www.birthparentsupportgroup.eventbrite.com

Find out more about the in-person group hosted in Eau Claire at
www.birthparentsupporteauclaire.eventbrite.com

Visit the WISAPSP website to view a new printable resource titled "Helpful Resources for Birth Parents." This resource includes suggestions from the participants of the birth parent support groups!



EVENTS SPONSORED BY



JOCKEY
BEING FAMILY.

WISAPSP is grateful for the sponsorship of events by Jockey Being Family (JBF) all around the state. These events are open to adoptive, guardianship, and foster families statewide!



Roller Skating Family Fun: La Crosse
April 4, 2023



Roller Skating Family Fun: Eau Claire
April 17, 2023



Family Lunch & Play: New Berlin
May 21, 2023



Family Baseball Night: Wausau
May 21, 2023



Family Day at the Farm: East Troy
June 23, 2023

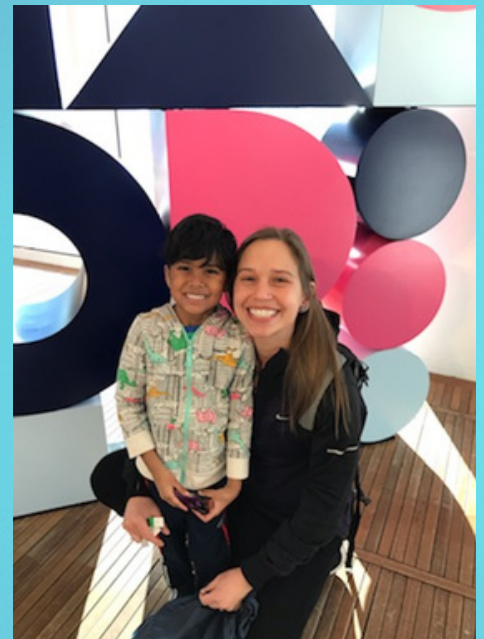


Family Fun at Little Amerricka: Marshall
June 24, 2023

This is a small sample of all the opportunities for Jockey Being Family sponsored events in your area. New events are added regularly throughout the year in various locations statewide. Visit wisapsp.eventbrite.com for more events sponsored by JBF in your region!

Check out all the fun!

On Sunday, February 12, 2023, families enjoyed a magical day at Discovery World. Nearly 100 people joined WISAPSP staff to explore the wonderful science museum located on Milwaukee's lakefront. The aquarium was a huge hit with all the fascinating marine life to see and getting to touch stingrays and sturgeons. There was even a virtual reality section where many of the kids got a chance to try out the headsets and see a different reality. There was so much to see and experience throughout the day! We were so thankful to see everyone there.



FEATURED LIVE WEBINARS

HELPFUL TIPS ON HEALTH CARE

Covering WI expert Cheryl Isabell, along with a member of the Department of Health Services, will be offering an informative webinar about the ins and outs of Wisconsin Healthcare--especially as it relates to adoptive, guardianship, and foster families.



USING BOOKS TO GUIDE ADOPTION DISCUSSIONS WITH YOUR CHILD



Having difficult discussions with your children is hard. Period. But you can practice these conversations and give structure to them by using books. Come listen to our adult adoptee speaker, Sarah Breland, share how books grounded their life and how they can be used to spark connection and healing.

NEW RECORDED WEBINARS

PARENTING WITH INTENTION

In this practical workshop you will: discover your values, set intentions, and learn how this may help in your parenting challenges, explore the parenting paradigms and become clear on how you want to approach parenting, and practice some peaceful communication strategies to use in all relationships.



PARENT DETECTIVES WITH PARENT COACH DANA



Put on your detective hat and grab your notebook for clues! As parents, when we're baffled by challenging behaviors in our kids, it can elicit many different feelings in us (perhaps anger, frustration, hopelessness, confusion or disgust come to mind). In this 40-minute recorded webinar, we will train our CURIOSITY about those behaviors and learn tools to help build future resilience in our kids.

family HIGHLIGHT

This spring, we are excited to feature the Mathias Family! Anthony and Molly live nearest the Milwaukee office. Molly was able to share their adoption story with WISAPSP staff from Milwaukee.

Anthony and Molly received placement of Daniel, their niece's son, when he was an infant in the hospital. A week after Daniel was born, they were asked to foster him with the long-term goal of adoption. Molly recalls there were a lot of variables to if they were going to adopt, but a week before Daniel's second birthday, they legally adopted him.



Molly explained the family experienced some challenges when they received placement. Daniel was born at 4lbs and needed to be fed often overnight. She stated, "He was such a little peanut." Molly explained she had no experience with bottles or infant formula. She was extra vigilant of contamination and sterilizing bottles.



The COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in early 2020 was especially difficult for their family, as many family and friends who had offered to help with respite child care and give them a break were suddenly unable to do so. Molly stated the family really bonded together during that time.

When Daniel entered their family, their biological daughter, Cleo, was 14 years old. Molly stated she was very enthusiastic and supportive of fostering, but she had a lot to learn about all the support and care that infants need! There is a 14-year age gap between Daniel and Cleo, so she was an only child for a long time. Molly joked that Cleo says when Daniel is 14 and she is 28 he can move in with her!

Molly shared with us that WISAPSP has benefitted their family through support and education in regards to adoption issues and navigating birth family relationships.



Molly shared that Daniel delights in all things fun and is a very active young boy. His positive, ready-for-anything attitude has brought their family a lot of joy. Thanks for letting us learn more about you, Mathias Family!



ONGOING VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUPS



Open Mic Teen Support Group



Coffee Talk for Adoptive and
Guardianship Parents



Trauma Informed Parenting



Birth Parent Support



KINnect Relative Caregivers of Children



Waiting to Adopt



Adult Adoptees

New attendees are always welcome at these free online groups, but we do ask you to pre-register. Attendees must reside in the state of Wisconsin.

CHECK OUT THE FUN!



ENJOY A FEW PHOTOS FROM VARIOUS EVENTS WISAPSP HAS DONE THIS YEAR! WE WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND A HUGE THANK YOU TO THE FAMILIES WHO ATTENDED THESE EVENTS!

family activity:

CREATE A SUMMER BUCKET LIST



Summer is fast approaching! Why not make a family activity out of the planning process by involving your children? Make a game out of creating a summer bucket list.

Involve your children by having them ask questions of all family members to see what everyone is hoping to do. Some questions to ask might include places they would like to visit, things they would like to see, or activities they would like to do. There are also lots of lists on the internet and social media. Using the ideas gathered, the family can combine their ideas into a summer bucket list.

Remember that your family summer bucket list doesn't need to be complicated or expensive. Some of the most memorable family moments can be simple. Get creative and enjoy the season!



Contact Us!



1-833-WIS-APSP



@WISAPSP



INFO@WISAPSP.ORG



WISAPSP.ORG

CHECK OUT OUR SERIES OF PRINTABLES OF MESSAGES FROM ADULT ADOPTEEES
FIND THESE AND MORE AT WISAPSP.ORG.


WISAPSP ASKED A PANEL OF ADULT ADOPTEEES
What are the most important messages for adult adoptees to hear today?
THIS IS WHAT THEY SHARED

“Your story is valid and unique. There is nothing wrong with you. You may have had to face challenges and overcome things that others didn't, which could result in special needs and unmet needs you now have. It's okay and it's normal. You aren't alone if you feel wounded from your trauma. Searching for the truth is healthy and it's your right.”

“Connect with other adoptees. It's healing, you learn a lot, there will be up and downs. Connections will let you know more about yourself. Don't be afraid to speak your truth.”

“Your journey is valid. Other adoptees stand with you, whether your journey is similar to ours or not.”


WISAPSP ASKED A PANEL OF ADULT ADOPTEEES
What are the most important messages for adopted youth to hear today?

“Don't be afraid to speak your truth. Love is not something that's limited. It's not a pie to cut up. You can love your birth family and adoptive family equally; you don't have to choose and shouldn't have to.”


“Being taken away from your birth mother isn't natural. You have been through trauma and it's a primal wound. It's okay to reach out to other adoptees and find people to talk to about it.”

“It's your story to tell, to who you want to tell, when you want to tell them, and it doesn't have to be the same to every person you tell. Your story doesn't need to look like and sound like others.”

“Connecting with adoptees is really important. Find adoptees who are willing to just listen. Ask questions, but you can tell and find a safe place for people to just listen who have gone through something similar and know your feelings more than anyone else can.”

“You are not alone. Your perceptions and emotions are real. Your experiences are valid. You may struggle, but you can overcome them. Finding therapy and other adoptees and groups that can help you work through your experiences are really important.”

“There's never going to be an age that you hit where you have it all figured out and you're okay with it.”


WISAPSP ASKED A PANEL OF ADULT ADOPTEEES
What are the most important messages for adoptive parents to hear today?
THIS IS WHAT THEY SHARED

“Although adoptees lead similar lives to non-adopted people and can seem well adjusted and capable of overcoming challenges, we can experience other circumstances that need to be overcome. We face challenges as we think about our identity, and it's ongoing. Often times these special needs and circumstances go unrecognized and unmet by society in general. Please learn more about these special needs and circumstances that your adoptee may face.”

“To transracial adoptive parents, your family's racial identity has now shifted. Your adoptive child's culture is now a part of who you are.”

“Your adopted child has been through a trauma whether you realize that or not. It's not your fault, but you need to acknowledge it. Be honest with yourself - you can help them. Be open so they can talk to you. Be okay if the story changes, and be open to that. That doesn't speak to you as a parent or their love for you, it's just the reality of it. It's important to listen, acknowledge it, and be honest with yourself.”

“Carefully and respectfully - adoptive parents need to remember that their adopted child's story didn't start with them. One of the most amazing things they can do is to help encourage their child's earliest moments. As they grow, help them start to find the missing pieces as they're able and it's developmentally appropriate.”