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ABRAZO
Adoption Associates

Straight from the Heart



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Last month, Abrazo's staff traveled to New York City to meet Ann Fessler, author of "The Girls Who Went Away," a best-selling memoir about the million-and-a-half American women once banished to maternity homes to birth illegitimate children then placed in closed adoptions. Ann, herself, was one such adoptee; her mom had also been adopted. It was Ann's search for her own answers that led her to interview a hundred such mothers about their experiences. Ann was reunited with her birthmom (one of those girls who'd gone away) almost fifty-six years after their first meeting in the hospital, and their relationship is still evolving, not as a mother and daughter, but as two women whose lives are intimately and irrevocably linked across time and space, by virtue of Ann's birth to one of those girls who went away.

We have all known Those Girls. They were the ones we whispered about in high school hallways, gossiped about in the locker room; girls "in trouble," who held their notebooks over growing bellies until suddenly, they disappeared for a couple of months to 'go stay with a sick aunt out of

state'... then came back, skinny again but older and wiser, somehow. They never talked about where they'd really been and what went on there, but we did—behind their backs, for years to come. In small towns like where I grew up, their personal pilgrimages became civic legend, and no matter how respectfully they married or how much they accomplished in life, we still whispered about them and what they'd done. We didn't point our fingers at their babies' daddies; no, they continued to maintain starring roles on the football team, they went on to court other girls, and never had to drop out of school or be hidden away. No one told tales about them... just those bad girls, the Girls Who Went Away.

Fessler quotes one such "girl" in her book: "Chances are the baby wasn't unwanted. It was a baby unwanted by society, not by mom. You couldn't be an unwed mother. Motherhood was synonymous with marriage. If you weren't married, you were a bastard, and those terms were used, I think I'm like many other women who thought, 'it may kill me to do this, but my baby is going to have what everyone keeps saying is best for him.' It's not because the child wasn't wanted. There would have been nothing more wonderful than to come home with my baby." (Glory, page 11.)

These "girls" were women from their teens on up. Some were caught up in naively thinking a night of passion ensured a lifetime of commitment. Some were snared in the "free love" revolution of the Sixties. Others were the victims of date rape, or incest, or circumstance. All were an embarrassment to their relatives, in an era in which getting "knocked up" out of wedlock was a social stigma permanently staining the entire family's reputation. Some were forced to lay down in the back seat of their parents' cars when driven in public, so as to not be seen "in that condition." They were outcasts,

and no matter how much they loved the babies they were carrying, they weren't considered "fit" to parent, and were minimally consulted as to their choices for their children's futures. Their adoption decisions were rarely that, which is why even the legal language referred to their placements as "surrenders." They came into the process with little and left with even less.

"After the birth of my first child I had nothing, not even a piece of paper. You walked out of the hospital with whatever, not even a piece of paper. You walked out of the hospital with whatever memories you had and the stretch marks on your body, that's it. There was no piece of paper. Nothing. It as if it never happened." (Christine, page 175)

Why should the lessons of *The Girls Who Went Away* still be relevant to us today, when adoptions are done so differently, where openness is an option and single parents are no longer an oddity? Because elements of their experience still impact those we care about who must face similar choices nowadays, albeit under different circumstances. The world is still full of women who relocate to complete adoptions in private through agencies like ours; who agonize over untimely pregnancies, who feel shame at being labeled as "birthparents," seen by others as "less than" because they "chose" not to parent, but to place. They, too, must carry their burden of grief across the lifespan; eased slightly, perhaps, by the knowledge of how their child is and where, but impacted for life, nonetheless.

"You know, it was such a long time ago, and I started thinking 'Just let it go. Just let it go on and move on' yet I couldn't, and I can't. It's a big issue to those who lived it. There are women out there who lost their firstborn child and never got to grieve. I can't even put it into words. It's a weird thing, this whole adoption thing where people think that someone could just hand their child over and it will be okay. Obviously it's not.

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Nursery News

Hugs and kisses to the newest members of Abrazo's family!

The teenage birthmom of tiny MADISON demonstrated wisdom beyond her years in the brave and selfless choice she made for her baby girl's future... A Dallas family found the answer to their prayers, in a newborn angel named MAYA... A loving birthmom spent months thinking and rethinking her options before choosing adoption for her baby boy TREYTON, a decision for which his family should be eternally grateful... Memphis and Austin, two towns known for great music, came together with the release of a hot new single known as CASON... For one Louisiana couple found that the biggest news of their year wasn't some great hurricane but a precious little baby girl named KATHERINE... Some say adoption is a leap of faith, and the new parents of baby TASHA proved themselves to be Olympic-caliber jumpers, getting here to meet their new daughter with no advance notice and in record time... A family with an East Coast bed & breakfast found their house filled with joy, upon the homecoming of one-year-old OLIVIA and her newborn sister, ISABELLA... A fabulous birthcouple gladly adopted an honorary pair of in-laws to their lives, liking their birthdaughter ANNIE's new parents as much as they did... OLIVIA's new mom and dad came all the way to Texas from Germany by way of New Mexico to meet their darling baby girl... California is home to great sushi, movie stars, beautiful beaches and now, one handsome 'lil Texan named PARKER... Some East Coast alum came to Camp Abrazo 2006 as a family of three but left as a family of four, thanks to the brave birthmom of days-old MATTHEW, who called the agency that weekend about upgrading his future through a loving open adoption plan... Baby ETHAN has his own personal guardian angel, the birthgrandfather who so proudly welcomed his arrival and that of his adoptive parents, before passing away unexpectedly just weeks later... A childless couple from Tennessee found their answer to prayers came in a tiny blue bundle named MITCHELL... One brilliant Texan earning her doctorate in physics made a particularly smart decision for GRACYE, the baby she loves but felt unready to parent... Lubbock is known for Texas Tech, Buddy Holly's music and one curly-haired 'lil darling named AVERY... CHEYENNE is going to be one pretty, Texas-born Jerseygirl!... The Steelers' newest fan, ETHAN, will always be recognizable, because he's sure to be the only kid in the stadium decked out with a Louis Vuitton backpack and seat cushion... Sometimes the best gifts come in the smallest packages; a Memphis couple has found their preemie QUINTON, has grown by leaps and bounds since joining his new family... Arizona againers who wished upon a star found little CAMRYN was well worth the wait, trying though it was at times... San Antonio had plenty of reason for fiesta with the homecoming of precious little MAYA... A tiny Texan named CAMDEN is sure to be the starting quarterback for his daddy's high school football team in years to come... The lucky parents of baby ASHTON got ready in no time, since their new son came long before the next available orientation weekend... God bless the broken road that led one childless Tennessee couple straight to a dream-come-true that they named MAKENZIE... Just three weeks after orientation, the joyous mom and dad of a surprise named ZACHARY rushed back to Texas to meet their beautiful baby-on-the-ground... A faithful Ohio family joined hearts and hands with the south Texas family of baby JONAS, to welcome him into their world... One loving North Texas birthmom endured months of bedrest to give baby TUCKER the best possible beginning in life, with a set of parents she hand picked for him... An Arizona couple traveled to Texas with their newborn before deciding that little ETHAN's life story was meant to unfold in St. Louis with a couple especially chosen to be his new mommy and daddy... Throughout the South, cotton may be king, but in Tennessee, there's no doubt the Walker girls are princesses, as evidenced by the royal welcome given to their latest, baby ADDISON, the "mini-me" of her big sister... They say Texas' prairie sky is wide and high, but New Jersey's definitely lit up with fireworks when baby SKYE came home... At Abrazo, we love our againers, and so did the birthmom who chose to have baby PARKER grow up in Michigan with a big brother who was once himself an Abrazobaby... Louisiana gained a new state asset with the homecoming of a Texas-born miracle named CLIFF... ANDREW's mom and dad were so excited about getting their preemie home to New Jersey, they made it their first roadtrip, stopping to visit several of their orientation buddies in states along the way... A couple of worldclass pet-lovers expanded their litter in the nicest possible way with the adoption of baby boy CHRISTIAN... One lucky Georgia couple finished orientation with a flair, when instead of working on their profile, they instead got to complete paperwork accepting placement of their firstborn's newborn sister, PIPER... She's already such a knockout, baby ELLA is destined to become Miss Mississippi 2025; remember that you saw it here, first!... They might have worried, initially, about their ages, but baby BRANDON never even asked! He's just glad his new folks found him only three months after joining Abrazo, because he's loving every minute with them... Two Texan teens made a very grown-up decision when they entrusted their newborn baby, KATE to their two new best friends in Memphis... A Michigan couple who started the year having to return a baby just two weeks after placement survived that tragedy and persevered, finding their faith rewarded in Texas just three weeks after orientation, when they became the parents of newborn daughter CLARA... Louisiana has been a state with more than its share of woes, but there's statewide reason to celebrate, now that they've added a Texas-born citizen named SPENCER to their ranks!... She was born a Texan, but baby MEERA gets to grow up in the lush green land of Minnesota, thanks to her birthparents' loving choices on her behalf... Just two days after completing orientation, a couple of two became a family of four, with the placement of two gorgeous little sisters, CYNTHIA (age 18 mos) and ALICIA (age 3 mos.)... Canadian hockey has gained a future star with the birth of baby JONAH, whose proud new dad is ready to get him on the ice just as soon as mom isn't looking... A tiny angel named AVA is surrounded by a circle of love that includes her new parents, her birthparents, a birthbrother, two birthgrandmas and even a birth-great-grandma!... Good things come to those who wait, as one Illinois couple can now attest, as they gaze adoringly at their newborn daughter, EMMA, who's undoubtedly made it all worthwhile... Baby LILLY didn't give her birthmom and adoptive family enough advance notice to enable them all to attend her birth as planned, but they still shared the experience long-distance, by phone (then celebrated together, as soon as they could!)... And as we go to press, we are reveling in our latest miracle, that of two-week-old OLIVIA and the epic tale of how one Idaho family and a Texas birthcouple came together, in a matter of days, that she may live happily-ever-after...

Congratulations all!



We're still alive. We're still here. We haven't died. Our issues are every day. We live this every day. Every day." (Suzanne, page 13.)

"Society expects you to continue with your life... be productive... don't think about it, don't dwell on it, don't feel sorry for yourself. You did it to yourself. But you are conscious every single day that there is a little person out there. They are trapped as a little person in your head because the last picture that you have of them is of a helpless baby... There is not a day since I was 15 years old that I haven't thought of him. I will live with this for the rest of my life. Criminals sometimes get a life sentence, and that's what I feel like I got." (Pam, pages 172-3.)

Ann Fessler had an idyllic childhood, with a loving couple who were and would always be her only Mom and Dad. They always knew her adoption story and shared what they knew with her, but they couldn't know that her birthmom lived just up the river from them. Ann wasn't driven to reunion because she didn't have the family she needed, growing up; rather, it was a quest to fill in the blanks that her parents could not, to see for herself the faces missing from those empty portrait frames of her life story.

Upon meeting with her, we cajoled Ann to let us bring her to Texas, to tell the Abrazo family her story in person, and gave her an Abrazo shirt to remember us by. This year, our Camp Abrazo t-shirts bore the slogan "All Trails Lead Home," which seemed especially fitting, considering Ann's journey, and that of each of us whose lives are touched by adoption. Wherever your journey takes you, may your trails lead you where you need most to go, and may you find the porch light burning bright, upon your arrival.

E lizabeth

Want an autographed copy of "The Girls Who Went Away"?

Send a tax-deductible Angel Account donation of more than \$25 (actual value) and we'll send it with our thanks.



INFANT ADOPTION AWARENESS TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONALS

Healthcare professionals and other medical providers who serve the needs of expectant parents are often on the frontlines, in terms of helping educate moms-to-be regarding pregnancy options. Yet, many are unaware of the options available in adoption planning; where to refer such patients, or even how to approach the subject with them.

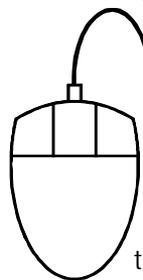
The Federal Government, recognizing this need, awarded a \$6 million grant to Spaulding for Children, to help with the formation of a training program for healthcare professionals. In Texas, Hope Cottage was named one of dozens of lead agencies nationwide, and they selected Abrazo as their official training agency for southwestern Texas.

Over the past few months, Angela Martinez, MSW and Holly Renee Todd, B.A., members of Abrazo's social work staff, have spent many hours presenting free continuing education seminars to hospital social workers, obstetrical nurses and public health clinic personnel, teaching them about current adoption alternatives and enhancement of options counseling skills. The training, which nets professionals up to 8 CEU hours, is free of charge, and can be offered onsite for hospitals, clinics and offices with sufficient numbers of interested participants (lunch is included.)

For more information, to R.S.V.P. for an already-scheduled training event, or to arrange to have this dynamic program presented at your local healthcare center, please call Abrazo, or look up www.iaatp.com.

FORUM FACTS

Looking for a quick colic cure in the middle of a sleepless night? Need to find the perfect family dinner recipe? Want to see your orientation group photo from way back when? Need to reunite with old friends? Want to get the latest Abrazo staff gossip? Need information on the adoption tax credit? Looking for help reuniting with your child's family? Want to see pictures from Camp Abrazo weekends dating back to the beginning? Whatever you're looking for, you can probably find it on Abrazo's Forum.



The Forum, our online community, has developed a life of its own. Since its inception in 2001, the Forum has accumulated more than 600 members, who have generated more than 52,000 posts, reflecting thoughts, questions and perspectives on more than 1,300 topics of interest to adoption triad members. If you've not yet visited this vital resource, log on to www.abrazo.org/forum and take a look around. Membership is free, and those who post regularly accumulate chili peppers in our "Forum Rewards" program, earning free gifts as well as friendship, support and acclaim around the globe (since forum members at present hail from across the U.S., Switzerland, the Netherlands, Germany and Italy). The Forum is open to the public, although the Gallery (containing assorted photo albums) is accessible only to registered members. Don't delay! Sign up, today!

The GOLDEN BINKIES



Best Supporting Actors

Having known the sorrow of losing a child, they came to the process with a special appreciation of birthparents, and their compassion and empathy shined through in every phone call. Add to that an ounce of Cajun charm, and what have you got? A couple more than ready to welcome a special little someone into their lives— along with all who were special to her. And so they did! Today, they're truly one big happy family, who have gone out of their way to offer ongoing support to not just the birthmom and her family, but the birthfather, too! So it is that our Golden Binkie for Best Supporting Actors is supportively awarded to WALKER & ANITA GARRISON, loving parents of baby Camille.

Best Reality Show

Only in reality could a couple be hoping to match one day, and parenting the next— literally! Our next honorees first met in a Texas hospital room, with less than 24 hours notice, for the sake of one very lucky newborn girl. The adoptive couple and the birthmom might have gone their separate ways after placement, but for one amazing development; they discovered they really, actually liked each other and couldn't bear to say goodbye forever- and so they didn't! They've reunited several times since placement, enabling two sisters each born in Texas to

maintain family ties across the nation, and for proving beyond a doubt that open adoption works in reality, our Golden Binkie for Best Reality Show goes to MAURY & DEBRA BROWN & TESSA JOHNSTON, proud parents of Samantha.

Best Cinematography

There was simply no contest for this next honor. Our next honorees had such a picture perfect life, it took them awhile to realize that something was missing, and that something was a baby. Reluctantly, they attended orientation, skeptical that open adoption might truly fit their needs. It took one amazing birthmom to turn them around; a young woman with wisdom beyond her years, who was strong and courageous and willing to share. Picture them together; it's a shot not even Kodak's finest could rival! and so our Golden Binkie for Best Cinematography goes out to Abrazo's favorite amateur photographer and his lawyerly wife: JOE & TONI LUTHER, photographic parents of Gracie.

Best Travelogue

From the land of Zorba to the bluebonnet fields of the Lone Star State, they have crisscrossed the globe and yet never had as phenomenal a journey as the one they followed to become parents. This couple had the patience of Job, however, and

they needed it, in a process which saw them flying to the Texas capitol for a BOG that went AWOL on them - at Christmastime, no less. Their greatest gift was yet to come, however, for within a month, they were winging back to the Lone Star State in a race against time, to become jubilant parents of one enchanting baby girl. So it is that our Golden Binkie for Best Travel Film is given today to BILL & SUSAN MARMAGAS, well-traveled parents of little jetsetter, Tasia.

Best Wardrobe

Some folks go through life looking rumpled and unkempt, but you'd never mistake them for the attractive, put-together couple who showed up in our May 2005 orientation group, the PeaBiscuits. This was the golden couple, the people we loved to hate in high school, who always looked calm, cool and collected, never a hair out of place, never a shoe untied. But it wasn't only on the surface; down deep, they were solid and true and ready for parenthood, a fact appreciated by the wonderful birthmom who chose them to raise her baby girl. For being as pretty on the inside as they are on the outside, and for having the most amazing wardrobe of any baby girl on the block, our Golden Binkie for Best Wardrobe goes to CHAD & SHARON FREEMAN, fashionable folks of Sally Beth.

Best Stunts

If there were ever an adoptive couple who could perform their own stunts, it was this one. Prototypes for Barbie and well, if not Ken, perhaps Clark Kent, these folks lent special meaning to the side dish "frozen peas." Already the parents of two teenage daughters, they had learned to leap burning buildings and dodge speeding bullets with the best of them, so when they got word that a premature baby boy waited in a San Antonio hospital for loving parents, they moved heaven and earth to be here for him. They're here with us this weekend, fit and stuntworthy as ever, so our Golden Binkie for Best Stunts is gymnastically granted to DAVID & NATALEE POINDEXTER, oh-so-athletic parents of baby Thatcher.

Best Adaptation

"Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans," goes an old saying, and we know folks here that understand that concept better than anyone. Last fall we were privileged to meet a couple who were so beautifully suited to adopt, we featured them in a video that was being made about Abrazo families-to-be. And they were to be a family, in record time, for just two months later, they were taking placement of a precious baby girl. No one could foresee the tragedy that lay ahead, when just 8 weeks later, this new mother



lost her life unexpectedly. Her grieving husband could've given up, but he was committed to their baby's future and the family they'd intended to grow, so he persevered and learned how to do little girl hairstyles, and it's only fitting that we give the Golden Binkie for Best Adaptation, with many abrazos! to ART HUTTON, proud papa of Madison.

GB Best Animated GB

Take one overgrown class clown; add a fun-loving momma who's always on the go; two towheads in constant motion; and one hip, hot, artistic birthmom and what do you have? A match that's never, ever dull! and an adoption story that was written for the ages. With a birthmom known for speaking her mind and a couple with secondary infertility who all genuinely embraced the open adoption concept, one lucky little boy is growing up with a secure future and what's sure-to-be good looks and a razor-sharp wit! For never not knowing what to say and for melding their busy lives together for frequent visits even now, our Golden Binkie for Best Animated Feature goes to WADE & ANGIE HOLLMAN & KRISTAL MARKUM, the very busy parents of Colby.

GB Best Picture GB

It's a story that would be right at home with swelling violins. Handsome doctor loses wife and faces life alone with two teenage kids, only to meet a Godly woman with long flowing locks, who longed to be a mother and devoted her life to serving the Holy Mother as a hospital chaplain. They married, and life was full, but something was missing, and that something was a baby. So they come to Abrazo, talk to several birthmoms and then suddenly, on the night of their church gala, they get The Call. Ditch the tux. Cancel your 'do. Travel out of town and meet the frightened teen who wishes to make her newborn daughter yours. On a wing and a prayer, this faithful couple went, kids in tow, and in the impersonal setting of a hotel lobby, the entire family made the most personal of vows, embracing



their new daughter's birthmom, revelling in the beauty of one tiny baby girl, and thanking God for His faithful answering of their prayers. For demonstrating that God's plans for us are greater than any we can possibly choose for ourselves, our Golden Binkie for Best Picture is faithfully presented to JOSE & TEREALYN SANTOS, heaven-sent parents to Ana Marie.

GB Best Scenery GB

Picture all-American homes on the greenest lawns you've ever seen in spring; summer blue skies with cotton-candy clouds; delicious dry leaf piles for screaming kids to run through in autumn; quiet streets piled with glistening white snowbanks in winter. These idyllic scenes set the backdrop for what's seen every season by one little girl who might otherwise have grown up seeing a very different side of life. Her brave birthparents had no home but plenty of heart; they made a plan for their daughter's future that included one nurturing Minnesota couple with Texas ties, and happily-ever-after goes on from there! For being on the scene when they most needed to be seen, our Golden Binkie for Best Scenery goes to SCOTT & PAULA BAUER, geographically desirable parents of McKenna.

GB Best Casting GB

Far be it from us to brag, but even Hollywood couldn't have cast this match any better! An unplanned pregnancy turned into an unanticipated miracle that took one Tejana princess stuck in B.F.E., one marathon runner with an infectious giggle, and one dashing daddy-to-be on a lifelong date with destiny! From their first fateful meeting to the circle of love formed in a Texas hospital around their newborn son to their stunning family photo at GlamourShots to their first shared weekend here at Camp Abrazo, this family was meant to be, without a doubt! For going above and beyond in their commitment to each other and to one blessed little boy named Tyler, our Golden Binkie for Best Casting goes to CRAIG & MARALOU BILLIG & TERESA ORTIZ.

GB Best Lighting GB

When the curtain first rose, you would've caught a dim glimpse of a young teenage couple struggling to make good choices amidst a bad family situation. They wanted a brighter future for their baby girl, but once their decision was made, it was "lights out" where their relatives were concerned. They fumbled around in the darkness for awhile, grieving their losses, but the adoptive family's commitment to openness cast a beacon of light across their path, illuminating everyone's hopes for reconciliation. For coming to see what was once a very negative time in their lives in a whole new light, our Golden Binkie for Best Lighting is presented to JAVIER & LORI MENCHACA, beloved birthparents of Desiree.

GB Best Script GB

Open adoption has a language all its own, and when pronounced correctly, can only be spoken from the heart. Like many foreign languages, it's hard to pick up, and some folks never do get it. Abrazo was blest to have one family who came into the program talking the talk and walking the walk. They'd already done an open adoption elsewhere and taken to the concept like natives. The birthparents with whom they spoke heard reliability and warmth and availability in their voices. The things they said were embracing and compassionate, and the things they did matched what they said. It wasn't always easy (just because this family is good at openness doesn't mean it's simple) but it's always been right, and thanks to them, both their sons are growing up with access to and awareness of their birthfamilies right from the start. For coming into Abrazo's adoption program with character as impressive as their dialogue, our Golden Binkie for Best Script can only belong to NATHAN & BETH TERRY, loving parents of Garen & George.

GB Best Direction GB

Some directors have a very prominent place on the set, while others tend to allow the cast to improvise until it's clear

that greater direction is needed. Our next actors were compelled to the stage by nothing more than the certainty that they wanted to parent. They became involved in a private adoption, and took home a baby girl, only to lose her in a legal challenge six months later. Shattered, they took a leap of faith by attending a Texas agency's orientation weekend in January of 2005, and suddenly, it seemed, there was an extraordinary new direction to their plans. Weeks later, they directed all of their time and devotion to a tiny newborn boy, and took him home, only to learn that he was suffering from a rare and terminal illness. It was devastating news, but following the direction of a Higher Power, they declined opportunities to return him to the agency's care and have committed themselves to making all his days as happy and well as can be. For living what they believe and for being open to God's direction in their lives, our Golden Binkie for Best Direction goes to DAN & ERIKA GALLAGHER, fabulous family of our Danny boy.

Best Grip

In the credits of every film, this is the one no one typically understands. We don't either, but at Abrazo we appreciate the chance to work with those who keep a good grip on themselves throughout the ups and downs of the rollercoaster ride we call adoption. And if anyone had it all under control, it was this couple. Young, childless, but self-contained and goal-oriented, they actually turned us down the first time we tried to arrange a birthparent phone call; they were headed on vacation and knew they wouldn't be ready for a baby that quickly. Yet when they were later chosen by a birthmom whose due date was months away, they didn't complain. No, they matched, and took advantage of having the time to build a genuinely caring relationship through many pre-due date visits. As it was, the baby's birthdate came earlier than scheduled, but this couple made immediate changes in their plans with grace, and they've approached the rigors of parenting with the same calm, can-do attitude. It's a pleasure, therefore, to give our Golden Binkie for Best Grip to the couple who kept theirs all along: MATTHEW & BETSY MCDONALD, perfect parents of baby girl Avery.

Best Short Feature

We knew from orientation that their time with us would be short. They were far too cute to linger for long, and sure enough, within weeks, their profile was chosen by a petite, pretty birthmom who didn't have long to go before her due date. Before you could holler "Shortcake!!" her baby was born, and the excited new parents spend a short time together in the hospital, revelling in their shortstop and making plans for a long-lasting friendship yet to come. For completing a quality adoption in record

time and for coming to Camp Abrazo so soon after finalization, our Golden Binky for Best Short Feature will be given, shortly, to JAY & MONICA MASTERS, the loving family behind baby Isaac.

Best Sequel

If you've ever walked out of a movie theatre thinking "that picture was so good, they couldn't ever possibly improve on it" yet wishing it would've gone on longer, than you get the gist of how Abrazo's staff felt after finishing a placement for a deserving Memphis couple last year. The sweetest baby girl couldn't have happened to a nicer family, who couldn't have happened to a nicer birthcouple. The adoptive parents were in town on business a few months back and we visited with them, asking if they ever planned on adopting again. The adoptive father reminded us they were no spring chickens, so to speak, and how could they ever hope to top their first adoption experience? But God had other ideas, and so did their daughter's birthparents, just 3 weeks ago when they called the adoptive family back to Texas for a second newborn daughter. The adoptive parents are still marveling at their good fortune, sleep-deprived as they are, and for sharing "the rest of the story" with us all, the Golden Binkie for Best Sequel is thankfully presented to BOB & MARJORY WALKER and JOHN & ROBYN DIMON, the four parents whose friendship has ensured a happily-ever-after future for angelbabies Katherine & Addison.

Best Western

It sounds like the plot to a slapstick comedy: college professor and his lovely wife get stuck spending the holidays in a west Texas motel watching the tumbleweeds somersault across the parking lot... but there was so much more to the story than that. After years of infertility, a faithdriven couple followed a call to Texas, where the cry "Western ho!" was replaced by "10-4, Good Buddies!" They didn't have long to ponder their fate, when a single mom in a panhandle town asked them to gallop in and save her baby girl from flooding creeks and bad guys and other varmints. Thus, at the end of the dusty trail, our cowboy in the white hat and his fearless heroine found themselves cradling the darling daughter of their dreams and pinching themselves to be certain it wasn't all just the campfire smoke going to their heads. But they're here with us this weekend as living proof that "it's not if but when" so podnuh, put your hands together as we saddle up to pass the Golden Binkie for Best Western to JIM & MARY HELEN BELLEW, little Kate's ma and pa.

Best Makeup

She looked like a covergirl from the first day we met her to the day she was in labor to the present day; she may not have always felt her

best but she certainly looked it! What mattered more, though, was the beautiful spirit that glowed from within. A hard worker, a loving mother, a troubled daughter, she hadn't always been given what she needed but she never stopped looking out for others, be it her mother, her child, her friends or the baby growing within her. Open adoption seemed overwhelming at first, but the adoptive parents she chose for her son's future couldn't imagine their lives without her, so they kept their door open, and as a result, we celebrate her presence with them this weekend, as we award our Golden Binkie for Best Makeup to STEPHANIE SAUCEDO, beautiful birthmom of dashing Dante.

Best Love Story

If there were ever a pair of starcrossed lovers whose plight deserved a motion picture all its own, it would be these folks. They've been through more challenge and adversity than most, yet they have stayed together through it all and they're still able to enjoy life and even laugh at themselves now and then. They moved to Texas recently from Arizona, bringing with them a tiny newborn son, whom they love with all their hearts. Yet, their conscience told them he needed more stability and security than they could offer. Unwilling to see him go through life without the best of everything, they sat down one day to call adoption agencies, and Abrazo is thankful that it was our number they called. That led to their careful review of Abrazo's parents-in-waiting, which led to their selection of a childless couple from St. Louis, which led to placement and the start of what we hope will be a lifelong partnership between these two couples. For theirs is a love story of five people, and we are humbled to call them not just clients but friends, so our Golden Binkie for Best Lovestory is lovingly given to RICHARD & DONNA FARNSWORTH, extraordinary first family of sweet baby Ethan.

Best Triple Feature

There's a Scripture which reads "cast your bread upon the waters and it shall return to you sevenfold." We're not sure who could eat all that soggy bread! but we know a family who's had that kind of faith even in the midst of great adversity, and we'd like to tell you about them. They came to Abrazo as veterans of failed adoptions, having had several prior placement plans fall apart on them. That alone might have crushed lesser folks, but not our friends. At Abrazo, they found the baby girl of their dreams, with God's help. They came back again, and matched with another birthcouple, but to our dismay, the birthparents had a change of heart and the couple was left disappointed. Not ones to give up, they matched with a darling birthmom who sent her baby boy home with them; but they were then tragically struck

with two medical crises at once; one impacting the adoptive mom, the other impacting the baby. Against their better judgement but at the agency's insistence, they dissolved the placement, afraid they were only ever meant to parent one child. But then Abrazo got an unexpected call; their daughter's birthparents had moved out of state and had a young daughter they could not continue to parent! This beloved adoptive family leapt into action, enabling their firstborn's biological sister to join their family. Still, there was one more surprise in store; the same birthparents had a newborn baby girl in state foster care and wanted her with her sisters. It took time, money, and impressive lawyering, but eventually, the family prevailed, celebrating at long last the homecoming of their third daughter! It was an amazing trifecta and we just couldn't be any prouder of these folks! So our Golden Binkie for Best Triple Feature is enthusiastically presented to GEORGE & KAREN DOOLEY and their trio of sweethearts, Brittany, Haleigh, and Trinity!



Years ago, the industry gave this award to honor the fact that indeed, it takes a village to accomplish anything great -- whether it's a film epic or a family. Sometimes, we may feel we're in it alone, but those often are the times when the plot turns for the best. One young mom here knows this, well. She placed her son through Abrazo many years back, and they've kept in touch ever since, thru ups and downs. She and the adoptive family spent a week together this summer, and while they faced challenges as to how best to meet their son's needs in the future, they know it'll take all of them, working together, so our Golden Binkie for the Best Crew goes to ELICIA, devoted birthmom of Nicholas.



Nicole Kidman may be taller than she is... Angelina Jolie may be wealthier... Meryl Streep may be older... and Lindsey Lohan may be better known... but none of those leading ladies could ever be the doting, devoted single mom that our next honoree has proven to be. Her journey to motherhood took her down what may have seemed to be endless alleys, but in time, the maze that was became the map that led to her discovery of the beautiful baby boy who needed her most. She is undoubtedly the leading lady in his life; his sun, moon and stars; and he is certainly the center of her universe. Sometimes, in truth, the greatest stars are the least recognized because they dedicate their efforts to elevating others rather than themselves. This mama truly and undoubtedly has a starring role in our memories, and so we are thrilled to share our Golden Binkie for Best Leading Lady with the woman who's taught us so much about the power of sharing: JEAN HENRY, stellar mom of Nathan.

CAMP ABRAZO



They say everything is bigger in Texas, and we're planning to make Camp Abrazo 2007 bigger and better than ever before! We're back at the Flying L Guest Ranch & Resort in the beautiful Texas Hill Country, where the creek runs cool but the cowboys run hot! By popular demand, we're bringing back children's recording star Joe McDermott to perform on Friday night, again. Saturday, join us in welcoming a new friend to the Abrazo family; author and adoption therapist Joe Soll of New York City will be our keynote speaker! He will also facilitate

one group experience especially for children, and another geared to birthparents; autographed copies of his books "Adoption Healing for Adoptees" and "Adoption Healing for Birthparents" will be available for purchase, as well. And of course, the weekend will be chockfull of the usual Camp activities; horseback riding, golf, Cowboy Olympics, the petting corral, swimming, dancing, s'mores, the Saturday night candlelight ceremony, and the Golden Binkies on Sunday morning. The cost (which covers room and board, horseback riding, golf and childcare) is \$216 per adult, \$146 for kids 12-17, and \$108 for children 3-11 (not including taxes/fees; no charge for children 2 and under.) Don't miss it! Call the Flying L today, and say "yessirreeee, partner, sign us up!"

COWBOY UP for Camp Abrazo 2007

June 22-24, 2007
Flying L
Resort & Guest Ranch,
Bandera, Texas



Reservations:
1-800-292-5134





ABRAZO / MITCHARD BIRTHMOTHER SCHOLARSHIP FUND



More than a decade of planning has gone into making this dream a reality. The Scholarship Fund was begun in 1995, when Jacquelyn Mitchard, a single mom and widow, saw two of her dreams come true: she adopted a baby girl through Abrazo and saw her first novel, "The Deep End of the Ocean," become a bestseller and motion picture.

Wanting to give something back in return, she donated \$10K to a cause near and dear to her heart; helping birthmothers better their lives after placement. And because she believed that bettering their lives required new opportunities, she designated the funds to be used towards sending birthmothers to school.

Abrazo's Board of Directors supported that goal, and designated additional funds from the agency's Angel Account to go to the scholarship fund. Jackie made additional contributions over the years, and the Board (under the faithful guidance of then-president Katharine Miles, secretary Lisa Cornish and treasurer Karen Stumbough) worked with the San Antonio Area Foundation to structure a scholarship program which will, hopefully, be sustained by the continued generosity of the Abrazo community over many decades to come.

The Abrazo/Mitchard Birthmother Scholarship Fund, which is being administered by the San Antonio Area Foundation, will award up to four (4) scholarships per year to the most qualified applicants.

Three annual scholarships of \$750 each will be awarded to the most qualified applicants, who:

- * have a high school diploma or GED and
- * whose child's adoption was through Abrazo and is already finalized, and;
- * who are already accepted at an accredited college or university for the upcoming year, and;
- * who have submitted an application that includes an essay sharing how her adoption experience has changed her life and/or her child's, why she needs further education and how the scholarship can help her reach her goals and impact her future.

One annual scholarship of \$500 will be awarded to the most qualified applicant, who:

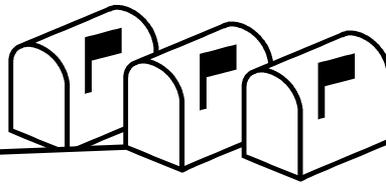
- * has a high school diploma or GED and
- * whose child's adoption was through Abrazo and is already finalized, and;
- * who is already accepted at an accredited college, university or technical/trades school for the upcoming year, and;
- * who has submitted an application that includes an essay sharing how her adoption experience has changed her life and/or her child's, why she needs further education and how the scholarship can help her reach her goals and impact her future.

Eligible students may re-apply for additional scholarship consideration by submitting a second application and essay. Winners may receive up to two (2) annual scholarship awards from the Fund (either two \$750 scholarships OR two \$500 scholarships, OR one \$750 scholarship and one \$500 scholarship) if chosen by the scholarship selection committee, which is comprised of San Antonio Area Foundation appointees.

The deadline for applications will be May 15 each year, for those needing financial assistance for the upcoming fall semester. For applications, please contact Abrazo Adoption Associates at 1-800-454-5683.

Those who wish to contribute to the Fund may send tax-deductible monetary gifts to the Abrazo/Mitchard Birthmother Scholarship fund in care of Abrazo.

Letters



By Amanda H.

Growing up adoption was a "hush hush" word. My family never talked about it. I mean how could you just give your baby away? I didn't realize how much courage and strength it takes, from both the birthmother and the adoptive parents, to be involved in a placement. Before finding Abrazo, I placed a little boy, Matthew, in a semi-open adoption. Which basically means I receive a letter and pictures once a year. I am in the process of changing that though. I would really love to have more contact with the AP's.

When I decided on Abrazo for my second adoption, I had absolutely NO idea how much that decision would impact my life....for the better! I found two new best friends in my AP's Cliff and Alison. They fill me in on EVERYTHING that is going on in Baby Cliff's life. They are just so wonderful and I have so much love and respect for them. We talk on the phone and write emails every week!! It is just absolutely amazing. I also now have a support group on the forum. We share our fears, joys, tears and smiles. It really is like we are one big happy family.

I believe that open adoption is the best choice a mother could make. Especially through Abrazo. The gals at the office are wonderful and are always there whether you need to talk or you need a big hug.

Now I know that adoption is nothing to be scared or ashamed of. It gives people a chance to grow bonds and make a couple's dream come true. Adoption is no longer something I feel bad about or look down on. Of course there are hard times and bad days but all of that makes me stronger. I thank my lucky stars that I found Abrazo!

Dear Abrazo Ladies:

Mark & I have said since the beginning that the Lord has definitely led us to you guys in order to complete our adoption journey. You continue to show us that you truly care and that you are willing to go above and beyond—not only in our case, but others as well. We love you guys and consider ourselves blessed to be associated with you.

Mark & Laurie S.



Abrazo Gals:

We wanted to thank you again for everything. You all made this adoption easy on us both and really helped Billy understand and be "ok" with open adoption. It was a long rollercoaster ride, and I'm glad it's over. In the end, though, it was worth it to see our beautiful daughter, Annie, and to help make a family for Jan and Greg. We couldn't be happier about the way everything turned out. And on top of everything else, another couple ended up with a baby because their birthmom was rooming next door to me in the hospital and heard about how great Abrazo is. Even though it was only in a roundabout way that I was the cause of that, it still makes me feel good. I will always be an advocate of open adoption, and you know if I ever have a chance I will be sending more birthparents your way. We will love you gals forever, and hope to see you again, soon!

Love Always, Debra & Billy S.

REGIONAL REUNIONS

If 2006 was the Chinese Year of the Dog, it was the Abrazo Year of the Weenie Roast! From coast to coast, the idea spread like peanut butter; let's have a party and get to know more Abrazo folk in our area!

In Newark, New Jersey, 13 families gathered in May at the home of Rod & Patty Hosmer (parents of Rebecca since 1996) to celebrate Texas-born babes in the Garden State! Children enjoyed the backyard trampoline, ranging in age from 9 weeks (Joe & Nancy Malaguti's new arrival) to 13 years (preteens were amply represented by the O'Toole trio, Hillary, Brian and Cassie, who were adopted in 1994) while adults chatted over tables laden with food. Abrazo alum Gene Horowitz and Anne Owens (parents of Texan tots Joshua and Michael since 1999 and 2002) presided over a trivia test of New Jersey knowledge administered to Holly and Elizabeth, the two Abrazo staffers in attendance, and everyone enjoyed meeting each other and hearing happy memories of orientations gone by (even the hero of the Tiger Team was there with his wife and sons, although he admits he is no longer using big cat by-products.) Then parents-to-be Anthony and Linda Ventura graciously served as tour guides for the Texans; they've since filled up the backseat of their car with a Texas-born baby boy of their own! Many thanks to the Venturas and Hosmers for coordinating this year's NJ reunion, and thanks to the Kacso, Romandetta, Singer, Evanchick, O'Toole, Horowitz-Owens, Gallagher, Fritzen, Benedetto, families for attending!



Next came the Michiganders, who gathered in Clarkston for a small picnic before hosting their big 'do in a waterfront park near Ann Arbor in August. Abrazostaffers Angela and Renee flew up for that soiree, which was coordinated by Abrazokin Mike & Brenda Weir (proud parents of Gabe and San Antonio sweetie Leyna) and Drs. Paco Lopez and Millie Vasquez (there with their angelic Texas-born babes Esperanza and Christina). Angela and Renee were proud to display Abrazo's agency colors; they drove up in a purple rental car, of all vehicles! Their comedic Yankee hosts set up a special cooler of grown-up drinks to commemorate Abrazo's traditional orientation centerpiece, and participants gorged on hot dogs, burgers and an enormous feast of homemade goodies as well. The youngest attendee was Scott & Susanna Brown's new Abrazobabe, Parker (proudly watched over by big brother Jasmison), while the eldest girls, Celina and Lindsay, marveled at their shared birthdays. Sisters Margaret Moretti and Enza Wilkerson, both Abrazomoms, swatted flies and kept a watchful eye on their hubbies, Dennis and Brad, as well as their brood of five cousins (three of whom came from Texas.) Other families in attendance included old-timers such as the Tucker-Lindebergs, Stead-Heads, Schoppmans, Phillips, Semers, current Abrazo parents-in-waiting Bob & Diane and new applicants Edwin and Gigi; thanks for coming, y'all!



Not to be outdone, the Memphis alum threw their now-annual bash two weeks later. Deftly organized by Abrazomoms Melissa Merritt & Susan Word for a second year, this gathering numbered over 100, including Pamela and Angela of the Abrazo staff. The youngest attendee was Kate Donnellan, born in Texas just 3 weeks ago; the most "mature" attendees were represented by the oh-so-youthful grandparents of Kate, Cason, Ashley and Teagan, with folks coming from as far away as Louisiana (thank you to Jim & Mary Helen Bellew and daughter Kate, for making such a journey to be there!) A variety of entertainment options were available; in addition to a moonwalk and a huge inflatable water slide, the kiddos in attendance also custom-made stuffed animals to benefit Abrazo's Angel Account. (Many sent their made-with-love toys back to Texas to be forwarded to beloved birthsiblings; the agency also appreciates the donation of the remaining toys, which Santa will put to good use this Christmas.) Muchas gracias to Susan Word and Melissa Merritt for again coordinating this event; thanks also to the Steadmans, Dooleys, Luthers, Huffs, Coopers, Whiteheads, Overcasts, Merritts, Words, Allens, Knaffs, Englishs, Bryans, Billigs, Stephensons, Walkers, Wilders, Donnellans, Thompsons, Browns, Varnavas, Emswilers, Reads, Frasier, Simmons and Pollans for being there and for being such fun.



Our friends in the northeastern United States may be more spread out but they're no less committed! Virginia Abrazomoms Amy Brown (who with husband Tim adopted Shayla and Hayden) and Susan Marmagas (whose hubby Bill is wrapped around daughter Tasia's little finger) joined forces to gather seven families from D.C., Maryland and Virginia, who'd taken placement between 1995 and 2006, for a barbecue at the Marmagas' home. Games and crafts kept the older kids entertained, while the babies played under the watchful eye of adoring parents, who shared photo albums and scrapbooks and swapped Abrazo tales. Even the postman enjoyed the fun, as he was drafted to take a group photo, upon stopping by to deliver the mail. We appreciate the effort the Marmagas and Browns made to plan this soiree, as well as the Brunners, Bradleys, Criscuolos, Coffeys and Uriegas-Machados' for their part in getting there and getting acquainted.



But don't feel left out, if you didn't make it to one of these events! There's still one more slated for this year: it's "Halloween Houston!", planned by two Abrazo moms in that area, Jennifer Burns and Katharine Miles. (For more details, see www.abrazo.org/forum/... and look under Abrazo News.) We've always bragged that Abrazo gets the best folks, from coast to coast; why not host a regional gathering in your own area, and find out what we're talking about?!





Abrazo's Angels



Many thanks to our 2006 contributors for their support

Happy Birthday to Abrazo's special benefactors, Tyler Billig (age 1) and Karen O'Toole (age 29+), who requested that their birthday party guests make donations to Abrazo's Angel Account in lieu of presents. In honor of Shellie Allen's 40th birthday, the agency also received a donation from Anna Vescova.

Families attending the Memphis Reunion contributed to a gift of \$461 towards the Angel Account that the agency is choosing to designate for the Wilkins Scholarship Fund for Abrazo's adoptees.

The Memorial Fund established by members of our October 2005 orientation ("Bobbing for Squirrels") in loving memory of adoptive mom Heather Howland Hutton received donations from Stephen & Caroline Blacklock and family, Bruce & Dyanna Thompson and family, Papa John's Pizza, and St. Luke's Hospital of Austin, TX. Heather's husband, Art Hutton, and their newly-placed daughter, Madison, were presented a special scrapbook compiled by Abrazo Family members at Camp, and a gift totaling all submitted donations was given to the Hutton family at time of finalization.

Many thanks to Abrazo board president Karen Stumbough and Sugarland resident Kim Setliff, who arranged for Abrazo to receive more than 35 stuffed animals and plush toys for our littlest office visitors, the birthsiblings of mothers making adoption plans here. The cuddly pals were donated by friends and relatives of long-time daycare teacher Doris Petty, in her memory (see letter, on the right.)

Thanks, also, to Angel Account donors Matthew & Betsy McDonald, Tim & Natalie Corrigan, Chris and Amanda Bauer, the McLanahan family, Andy & Anne McCarroll, Greg and Carol Tate, Dane & Mandy Womble, George & Karen Dooley, and Jim & Andrea Steadman, for their kind gifts this year. Because Abrazo is a 501(c)3 charitable organization, all

contributions are tax-deductible, and because we truly are a nonprofit agency, your extra giving enables us to facilitate extra miracles, on behalf of those who are less advantaged and whose lives have been touched by adoption.

To Whom It May Concern:

Doris Petty was a Bridge Class Teacher who for more than 20 years served and inspired children at The School for Little Children at Sugar Land's First United Methodist Church. She died Wednesday, July 19, 2006 after an extended illness.

During her long career of teaching young children, she had won numerous awards. But more importantly, she changed the lives of many little ones, for the better. She was an instrumental force in the lives of their families, as well.

Doris had requested that everyone attending her memorial service bring a stuffed teddy bear, to be donated to a child in need. As you can imagine, the response was overwhelming. Please accept these bears and pass them along to a child in need, in honor of the memory and last wishes of our dear friend and beloved teacher, Doris Petty.

Thank you, Kim Setliff

FRIENDLY REMINDERS

The holidays are coming, and with it, a flurry of end-of-year festivities! Don't forget:

* Annual report mailings are due at Abrazo by or before December 15, every year!

* End-of-year charitable contributions to Abrazo's Angel Account help provide brighter tomorrows for years to come; donations can be designated for general use, for the Birthparent Scholarship or the new Abrazo Tots Scholarship Fund.

· Abrazo's annual stocking drive is off and running! Send a filled Christmas stocking for an underprivileged birthsibling (boy or girl, toddler/school-age/teen); stockings need to be here by 12/15/06 in order to reach a needy child in time for Christmas.

Welcome to Abrazo

Meet Our Wonderful Staff



Elizabeth Jurenovich
M.S., L.C.P.A.A., L.P.C., L.M.F.T.
Executive Director

Angela Martinez, M.S.W.
Family Services Coordinator

Pamela Zinsmeister, M.A., LPC-Intern
Maternity Services Coordinator

Holly Renee Todd, B.A.
Legal Services Coordinator

Mona Minjarez, L.B.S.W.
Agency Services Coordinator

Crystal Cisneros Martinez
Administrative Assistant

Licensed Professional Counselor
Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist
Certified Open Adoption Practitioner

We're happy to be here to serve your needs and your child's throughout the adoption process. At Abrazo, we consider you family! Please help us know what we can do to meet your individual needs more effectively.

Abrazo . . . A Better Choice for a Brighter Future.

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THE INSIDE Scoop

THANK YOU, MUD! is just one of the kid-pleasing, toe-tapping tunes available on three award-winning CDs, if you missed hearing the musical stylings of recording artist Joe McDermott at Camp this year. Send a minimum Angel Account donation of \$10 per CD, and we'll fill your home or car with unforgettable songs guaranteed to put a smile on your face and a melody in your heart... BIENVENIDOS to our 2006 Parents of Tomorrow weekend graduates; Connecting-The-Tots (1/06), Fools Crush In (3/06), "And Then There Were Ten!" (7/06) and "Holy Flying Fish!" (9/06)... THE INNER CIRCLE: New! For our frequent Forum posters who are Abrazo alum in good standing and whose posting level exceeds 1500, an elite membership offering ambassadorial privileges, free sportswear, complimentary subscriptions to Adoptive Families magazine and restricted access to our online club, Inner Sanctum... PRAYERWORTHY: Abrazo has a number of past clients and friends serving in Iraq, and we ask for continued

prayers on behalf of them and their families... ALPHABET SOUP: As if her name was not long enough already, our Executive Director recently passed state boards, adding "L.C.P.A.A." (Licensed Child-Placing Agency Administrator) to her title...STORK STOP: Congrats to October orientation graduates Chris & Jennifer on their unexpected birth of a homegrown baby girl; to Abrazo alum Mickey & Elaine on their adoption of baby Makayla's older sister; to birthmom Jada on the arrival of her first granddaughter; to Chad & Shannon on the birth of a homegrown son; to Shawn & Jill on their birth of their second miracle, a girl; and to Rich & Jann on their successful private adoption of the baby found for them by Abrazo... REALITY TV: Adoptive mom and professor Dr. Rosalie Dow was featured on the TLC program "Surviving Motherhood" in May, 2006; Rosalie said she consented to share the story of how she and her husband and daughters opened their hearts and home to a Texas-born baby boy in hopes of promoting open, domestic adoption... CONGRATS: to Abrazo's administrative assistant, Crystal, who recently married long-

time love Mario Martinez, and to legal services coordinator Holly "Renee" Todd and her husband, Kenny, who are expecting their first child, a girl, in November... IN MEMORIAM: Prayers and loving thoughts go out to the families of birthfather Robert Camac, and adoptive mom Heather Hutton, both of whom passed away unexpectedly this year... WEBSITE CHANGES: Be on the lookout for Abrazo's new, improved website, coming out soon; our thanks to webmaster Paul Kallick for his innovative efforts to keep us looking good and running smoothly... HOT READ: "Cage of Stars" is the newest book out by Abrazomom and bestselling novelist, Jacquelyn Mitchard, and it's been drawing rave reviews from critics coast to coast...NEW YORK, NEW YORK: Pamela and Elizabeth were in New York City in September for the Adoption Crossroads and Origins, U.S.A. annual conference, "Shedding Light on the Adoption Experience." If you missed that educational opportunity and want to attend something closer to home, check out the AKA conference in Austin, featuring Patricia Martinez Dorner, author of "Talking to Your Child About Adoption." To register, go to www.adoptionknowledge.org... TREEHUGGERS: If you'd rather receive Affinity by email and save a tree in the process, please email a request to webmaster@abrazo.org, and we'll make note of it, with the forests' thanks.

Check it out: abrazo.org/forum

Online exchanges between birthparents and adoptive families on a variety of important-to-you topics and issues! Log on today!



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