



Adoption Connection

a publication of Infant of Prague Adoption Service

Teen Mothers & Adoption Option

According to the California Department of Education, the San Joaquin Valley has state's highest birth rates to teen mothers.

Sadly, the statistics also show that the futures for teen mothers can be bleak. 70% of teen mothers drop out of high school, with only 29% of those ever returning to earn a high school diploma. Without an education a teen mother will have difficulty obtaining a well paying job or the resources necessary to raise a child. Further, 80% of the fathers do not marry the teen mother of their child and only one in five provide her any financial support.

Unmarried teen mothers who raise their children are more likely to repeat an out-of-wedlock pregnancy, are more likely to remain unmarried, and are more likely to have children who experience out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

In contrast, according to statistics by the National Council for Adoption, young women who make adoption plans are more likely to:

- **Finish school and attain a higher level of education**
- **Obtain better employment and have more financial stability**
- **Less likely to repeat another out-of-wedlock pregnancy**
- **More likely to marry in the future**
- **Report a high level of satisfaction with their decision**

Of all the pregnancies reported in the State of California, less than 1% of teen mothers make a plan of adoption.

Research shows that adoption is rarely a serious consideration. There are several reasons for this. The silence and shame surrounding the history of adoption still haunts many women today. Others may struggle with cultural influences, while others simply cannot imagine handing their beloved child to another family. To further fog the picture, the media glamorizes teen parenting, instead of showing the realistic struggles involved. Whatever the reason, it appears that the choice of adoption needs a voice.

We find that most people are simply unaware of healthy adoption practice. They don't know about open adoption. They don't understand that if they are not ready to parent, they can still have a relationship with their child while pursuing their own personal goals.

Each pregnant woman who comes to Infant of Prague receives more than just adoption counseling, she receives pregnancy counseling. This involves connecting her with medical care and promoting a safe, healthy pregnancy. It also includes candid discussion about her future. Without bias or judgment, we help each woman assess her options and opportunities. We never pressure her. Rather, we want each woman to make the best decision for herself and her child. As a result, whether she decides to parent her child or make an adoption plan, her decision is an educated one.

The IPAS staff is committed to



providing adoption education to help take the stigma and mystery out of adoption. Most of all, adoption education will help those who face an unplanned pregnancy with the tools to make a truly informed choice.

We are reaching out to students, teachers, clinicians, school nurses,

and healthcare providers to partner with us in providing education about healthy adoption practice. You can support these efforts. Invite us to speak at your workplace, church, school or community organization. Share your adoption stories or pass along our brochures and newsletters to those who have not heard about the beautiful, yet often dismissed option of adoption. Together we can make a difference in the life of a teen mother and her child.

A Toast to the Children

A call comes in....a social worker responds....a birthmother in distress receives counseling and support in her time of need....a baby goes homes to a loving adoptive family. This is the story of Infant of Prague, made possible over the years because social workers trained in adoption answer the call, parents come to classes and do their "homework," and doctors, nurses, pastors and a myriad of other concerned folks refer those in need of our services.

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Director's Note *by Stephanie Grant*

Here at Infant of Prague Adoption Service we are ecstatic to be honoring the two Judy's at our annual fundraiser on October 8th. Thanks to their years of dedication and hard work, our passion to provide supportive counseling to women who face an unplanned pregnancy continues. The contributions that these women made to the practice of adoption are more valuable than ever.

Over the past 30 years in the United States, a paradigm shift has taken place with an unspoken bias that is common among both professionals and clients. It is based in the belief that a birth parent that chooses a plan of adoption simply does not care for her child or is an unloving individual. We know this is not only untrue but the polar opposite of truth.

We have the blessing of walking along side birth parents in crisis, providing comprehensive support and education and then witnessing them make the best choice for their unborn child. Whether the decision is to parent or to choose an adoptive family, they never make the decision lightly. They want the best for their child; a truly loving choice.

We appreciate your continued support that enables us to provide services to courageous birth parents. Your help enables us to educate professionals and community members alike, striving to break down the bias that has been common for too long. We are available to provide trainings and presentations to any group or business that would benefit from the information. The negative shift in culture did not happen overnight and it will require all of us to join together and get the message out that adoption is a very loving and unselfish option.

A Toast to the Children

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None of this would be possible without the generous financial help of the families and businesses of the San Joaquin Valley who help pay for our outreach materials, support our birthparent program, and ensure our ability to continue providing the caring professional services for which we have been known since 1953.

"A Toast to the Children" will take place on Friday evening, October 8, 2010 at Weber BMW in Fresno. We will be honoring Judith Casson and Judith Luft, both of whom retired in 2008 after giving countless years of dedicated service to the children, birth parents and families of Infant of Prague.

As we plan for this annual fund raiser we would love to include YOU or YOUR BUSINESS as sponsors of this event. To those who have already responded, we are forever grateful! To those who have not yet been contacted, please note the various opportunities listed in this newsletter.

Infant of Prague Adoption Service 8th Annual "A Toast to the Children" Friday, October 8, 2010

Sponsorship Levels

- _____ **\$5,000 - Private Reserve**
Name placement on invitation and advertisement for event, event signage, recognition at event, and fifteen complimentary tickets.
- _____ **\$2,500 - Vintner's Collection**
Name placement on invitations, event signage, recognition at the event, and ten complimentary tickets to the event.
- _____ **\$1,000 - Winemaker's Select**
Name placement on invitation, event signage, recognition at the event, and eight complimentary tickets to the event.
- _____ **\$500 - Cellarmaster's Choice**
Name placement on invitation, recognition at the event and six complimentary tickets.
- _____ **\$250 - Connoisseur**
Recognition at the event and four complimentary tickets to the event.
- _____ **Gift Card**, Item for Silent Auction or other Donation:

Name as you would like it acknowledged for publication:

_____ **Please keep this donation anonymous.**

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ St: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____



Surprise Boxes

We are calling on local businesses and individuals to sponsor **Surprise Boxes** for our upcoming fundraiser, "A Toast to the Children". These boxes are a welcome change from the usual auction and raffle tickets. **Surprise Boxes** contain gift cards, gift certificates and cash, all in denominations of \$25.00 or more. Guests purchase the boxes for \$25.00, in lieu of a raffle ticket, as one of the boxes contains a grand prize.

Our goal this year is to sell 200 Surprise Boxes to generate \$5,000.00. As you can see, the \$25.00 gift is relatively inexpensive for businesses or families to donate, but the combined effort is tremendous. If you can help us out by donating a gift card, gift certificate or cash, please contact our office. Anything you can give will help make this event a success.

Birth Mother Program Named for the Judies

In 2008 Judy Casson, our Executive Director and Judy Luft, our senior social worker retired from Infant of Prague. Over the last 35 years, each of these women made tremendous contributions to our agency and to the world of adoption in the Central Valley.

Their efforts have ensured the advocacy of our adoptive families and the respect and support of countless birth mothers. Their dedication and leadership brought IPAS to the forefront of modern, healthy adoption practice and the agency continues to be considered one of the most venerated in the Central Valley, thanks to their legacy.

In an effort to recognize these two special ladies and the years they dedicated to our agency, the Board of Directors at Infant of Prague has named them in a

vital program for the support of our birth mothers: **The Judith Casson & Judith Luft Birth Mother Assistance Program.** We couldn't imagine a more appropriate way to honor the unwavering devotion and respect they showed birth mothers through the years. This program continues that legacy as proceeds will be used to help birth mothers with a variety of needs; from counseling or medical services, to providing for living expenses and personal needs. Donations can be made to Infant of Prague and designated to this program.

Our Board will honor "the Judies" at our annual wine tasting, "A Toast to the Children" which will be held on Friday, October 8, 2010. Please plan to join us and honor these remarkable women.



If you plan to adopt this next year, keep in mind that the Federal Adoption Tax Credit has just been increased to \$13,170.00 for the 2010 fiscal year. Talk with your accountant or see IRS Form 8839 for information on how the tax credit can work for you.

Ready to Adopt Again?

We are in the process of taking names of families who plan to adopt again. We hope to schedule an update class series by the end of this year. Couples adopting a second (or third) time participate in an Update Class Series and a revised home study process. We also offer a different fee structure. Interested couples can contact Gloria at the IPAS office at 447-3333.

Special Baby Gift

Check out: www.foursewingsisters.etsy.com the next time you're in need of a special baby gift. Kelly Haskell, daughter of our own Karen Spencer sells beautifully embroidered custom baby ware on this site. 50% of all proceeds are donated to Infant of Prague. We're so appreciative of Kelly's talent and generosity.



PICNIC RESPONSE



Did you attend the IPAS picnic this year? If so, we would love your feedback. We have held the annual picnic at Woodward Park in April for the last several years and are wondering if families are interested in a change of location or perhaps a different time of year? Please forward suggestions to jfelger@infantofprague.org. Thanks!!



Infant of Prague Adoption Service

6059 N. Palm • Fresno, CA 93704

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Save The Date...
A Toast to the Children
October 8, 2010

(559) 447-3333

Stay Connected

Calendar

September 14

Orientation for prospective adoptive parents, 6:00pm.

September 15

Six-week class series for adoptive couples begins, 6:00pm.

October 8

Wine tasting fundraiser
A Toast to the Children,
6:00pm.

October 12

Orientation for prospective adoptive parents, 6:00pm.

November

National Adoption Awareness Month

Help with upcoming events...

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Email _____

New address, please update your records

Events you would like to volunteer for:

Wine Tasting Fundraiser

Guest Speaker for Orientation Meetings or Adoption Training

Becoming a TLC Family

Please fill out and mail to: **Infant of Prague Adoption Service**
6059 N. Palm • Fresno, CA 93704
www.infantofprague.org
559-447-33336