

# *The 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Training Day for Professionals*

Presented by  
Adoption Community of New England, Inc.



Featuring

Eleanor Allen  
Deb Blanchard  
Joan Lefler Clark  
Anne Coleman  
Etta Lappen Davis  
Jeff Farber  
Karen Greenberg  
Jeffrey R. LaCure  
Brooke Rizor  
Wendy Schmidt

Friday, June 18, 2010  
8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
The Holiday Inn, Marlborough, MA

## **Faculty**

**Eleanor Allen, JD, LICSW**, works with Bright Futures Adoption Center, a program of RFK Children's Action Corps, and has a private psychotherapy practice. With over 20 years experience working with children and families, Eleanor has been a therapist, mediator, advocate and Guardian Ad Litem. She has counseled all members of the adoption triad and is an adoptive parent. Eleanor is a former ACONE Board member.

**Deb Blanchard**, is the founder of Search & Reunion Support Services, former Assistant Director of Adoption Connection, a triad educator and ACONE Board member. Through her workshops and training seminars, Deb has always been focused on bringing a greater understanding on how we are all connected.

**Joan Lefler Clark, M.Ed.**, founder of Adoptions Explained, LLC, is an adoption educator and advocate. She is also a Hague Evaluator for COA. Joan was a public school educator for 16 years and is the former Executive Director of ACONE. She is currently the Vice President of the Adoption Professional's Association of Massachusetts.

**Anne Coleman, Ph.D.**, is a psychotherapist and educator with over 16 years experience as a clinician and special lecturer in graduate education. In her private practice, Adoption and Beyond Counseling, she specializes in working with individuals and families within the adoption triad as well as individuals and couples coping with grief and loss surrounding infertility. Anne facilitates support groups through ACONE and RESOLVE, in addition to currently serving as an ACONE Board member. She is an adoptive mother of two and an adopted person.

**Etta Lappen Davis, MA.Ed.** is the founder and Principal of Etsky Consulting. Etta is an expert concerning regulatory oversight and accreditation in the child welfare arena. A frequent presenter on issues concerning adoption regulation, she is COA's Hague consultant and trainer, a contract consultant with CWLA, and court-appointed monitor on a consent decree. Etta is a former ACONE Board member, who is touched by adoption as an extended family member.

**Jeff Farber**, a producer, director and cinematographer, has been an award-winning independent filmmaker for over 25 years. His work focuses on stories where societal norms create circumstances of inequality. *Living On The Fault Line* has been shown extensively including screenings at the NCORE, NACAC, and the White Privilege Conference.

**Karen Greenberg**, Esq., regularly represents adoption agencies, adopters and birth parents in all aspects of adoption law, having concentrated in family law matters for more than 20 years. Karen also represents many individuals in disputed family law matters and is a frequent lecturer and author on adoption-related issues. She is a founding member of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys, where she was elected to the Board of Directors in 2004 and became President in May 2007. Karen is a former ACONE Board member.

**Jeffrey R. LaCure**, MSW, LICSW, Psy.D., a nationally recognized author, educator and clinician, has over 20 years of clinical experience in both higher education and high school settings. He is currently a social worker and educator for Wellesley High School. Jeff provides consultation to teachers, special educators, and administrators around a variety of adolescent and young adult issues including: suicide and depression, substance abuse, anger and violence management, dating and partner violence, adoption and separation, and stress management and conflict resolution.

**Brooke Rizer**, LCSW is an adoption social worker with The Home for Little Wanderers. She conducts trainings for prospective adoptive parents and has facilitated groups for children adopted through the Department of Children & Families. Prior to her work in adoption, she worked with teenage boys aging out of foster care and as a clinician in a therapeutic school setting.

**Wendy Schmidt**, OTR/L, MPA has over 25 years of rehabilitation experience providing occupational therapy evaluations and treatment to physically and neurologically challenged infants, children and adults. Wendy designed her treatment approach for infants and children exposed to institutional settings (orphanages, long-term hospitalization), incorporating years of experience as a researcher and consultant on various international child health projects, as well her experiences as a home care and clinic-based, pediatric occupational therapist.

## **Morning Session 8:30 – 11:45 a.m.**

### **A1. Prospective Adopter Preparation and Approval: Making Tough Decisions**

Adoption agencies and home study professionals are often faced with challenging dilemmas as they weigh the desires of prospective adopters to become parents against the best interests of children in need of families. Anne Coleman, Etta Lappen Davis and Karen Greenberg will explore preparation and approval of adoptive families from three perspectives:

- Legal: What do statute and case law (including ADA cases) tell us about making home study decisions concerning approval and disapproval of prospective adopters?
- Regulatory: What factors must home studies address in compliance with state and federal regulations? What flexibility do providers have to establish agency policy concerning when to approve, and when not to approve, prospective adopters?
- Clinical: What are the child and family characteristics, clinical factors and other variables that home study providers should consider in order to make sound decisions, not just in the immediate future, but for the entire adoption journey.

Participants will use case examples to apply these three perspectives to decision-making.

### **A2. Sequencing Care and Development: Positive Strategies – Positive Adoptive Family Outcomes**

Infants/children with histories of adoption/foster care often present with multiple and complex factors that promote survival in pre-adoptive environments and at the same time, place them at risk for physical, behavioral, developmental and/or learning challenges later in life. Wendy Schmidt will provide concepts from a developmental perspective, emphasizing positive, strength-based approaches within a system of prioritized care to mitigate these risk factors. She will help professionals working directly with parents and the adopted/foster child optimize the child's physical, behavioral and overall development within home, community and learning environments.

### **A3. Loss, Language, Listening and Learning: The Impact of Previous Losses on the School Experience**

Schools have a significant impact on the self-esteem and welfare of children. Professionals will learn how it is difficult, and sometimes impossible, for foster and adopted children to fully participate in and complete curriculum requirements because of the losses they have experienced. Joan Clark will explain K-12 curriculum in the context of the schools' goals and objectives with detailed alternatives and explanations for replicating these initiatives. Jeffrey R. LaCure will describe school-based support/counseling programs.

## Afternoon Session 12:45 – 4:00 p.m.

### **B1. Why Birth Mothers' Stages Matter**

In order to provide objective, non-coercive services to women and men considering adoption plans for their children, adoption professionals, hospital social workers, medical personnel and therapists should understand birth mothers' six stages from grieving to integration. Birth parents' futures are affected by their decisions to make adoption plans, whether the adoptions are open or confidential. It is essential for birth parents to integrate the past with the present. Deb Blanchard will help educate professionals so that these issues are acknowledged and understood within the therapeutic context. Followed by a panel of birth parents who will share their experiences.

### **B2. Healthy Placement Transitions**

How a child is moved from one family to another bears a lifelong impact. Depending on the age and developmental stage of the child at the time of placement, there are a myriad of factors that inform and affect the transition. Adoption agencies and adoption professionals, birth parents and prospective adopters, foster parents, therapists and other professionals meet with barriers to child-centered placement transitions. How can we prepare the child and all involved adults in order to minimize the adverse effects of placement changes? Eleanor Allen and Brooke Rizor will lead a discussion to explore the impact of transitions, to learn what providers are currently doing to promote healthy transitions, and to create recommendations for best practice.

### **B3. *Living On The Fault Line, Where Race and Family Meet***

Jeff Farber will present his documentary film that explores the “intersection where family love meets racial injustice” in the experiences of transracial families created through adoption. A facilitated discussion about the issues addressed will follow the film, including:

- How transracial families are often not considered a family.
- When children become aware of race, and how that awareness changes with time.
- How the issue of race changes as children develop and intersect more with the community at large.
- How parents and family come to understand racism and white privilege.
- What families can do to address these issues to create inclusive and supportive transracial families.

Friday ♥ June 18, 2010

8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

Check-in, coffee and pastries

8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Training

Fee includes: All materials and certificates

Continental breakfast

Morning beverage break

Buffet lunch

Afternoon beverage break

Refunds will be processed until June 7, 2010 and require a \$15.00 per person handling fee. There will be no refunds after June 7, 2010.

Registration deadline: Noon, June 14, 2010

### **Directions:**

### **Holiday Inn, 265 Lakeside Avenue, Marlborough, MA**

From Route 495: Use exit 24A for Route 20 East/Lakeside Avenue.

Exit 24A is north of the MA Pike and Route 9, and north of Route 95.

The Holiday Inn will be almost immediately on your left.

### **Professional Credit:**

This program is appropriate for adoption, mental health and medical professionals, educators and advanced students.

It is anticipated that this program will be accredited for 6 credit hours by NASW and LMFT. Updated information about accreditation will be available on the website at [www.AdoptionCommunityofNE.org](http://www.AdoptionCommunityofNE.org).

### **Questions?**

If you require more copies of this brochure or have any questions about this program, please contact the ACONe office at:  
508.366.6812 ♥ [info@AdoptionCommunityofNE.org](mailto:info@AdoptionCommunityofNE.org)

*Pre-registration is required.*

Please select one Morning and one Afternoon Workshop

A1  A2  A3

B1  B2  B3

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Name

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Professional License # - must be included for continuing education credits

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Address

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Address Line 2

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City, State, Zip Code

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Email Address for registration confirmation

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Phone

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Name of Agency if coming under agency membership

Please check appropriate amount:

Early Bird Rate: Faxes received/Postmarked by 5p.m. May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010.

\_\_\_\_\_ \$100.00 – ACONe members

\_\_\_\_\_ \$140.00 – non-members of ACONe

Regular Rate: Faxes received/ Postmarked after May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010.

\_\_\_\_\_ \$115.00 - ACONe members

\_\_\_\_\_ \$155.00 - non-members of ACONe

Join ACONe now and attend as a member.

\_\_\_\_\_ \$50.00 for individual/family membership

\_\_\_\_\_ \$100.00 for agency/organization membership

Please consider making a donation to provide for scholarships.

\_\_\_\_\_ Donation

\_\_\_\_\_ Total dollars enclosed or to be charged

MC/Visa/Discover # \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Three digit # on back of card \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of cardholder

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