Celebrating Nine Decades of Excellence

March 12, 2013 will be the 90th anniversary of the day The Cradle Society opened its doors. Ninety years – roughly three generations – is a long time to be finding families for babies, and to be doing it the way it should be done: with the best interest of the child first, always. And while The Cradle isn’t the oldest adoption agency in the United States (a handful date back to the 1800s), our longevity attests to the quality of Cradle services and the reputation we’ve built for excellence and ethics in adoption practice.

We invite you to celebrate this milestone with us by taking a look back at some of the highlights of the last nine decades… ever since the day a very determined Evanston woman put her wits and her sympathies to work to bring The Cradle to life.

The 1920s: Getting Started & Creating a Model Nursery

After eight years of placing babies with families directly from the nursery at Evanston Hospital, wife, mother, local civic leader and adoption advocate Florence Dahl Walrath convinced five prominent businessmen to contribute $1,000 each for the down payment on a house at 2039 Ridge Avenue. The home was purchased on February 19, 1923 for $15,500; on March 12 The Cradle Society was officially in business. Over the next few years, two adjacent properties were acquired through donations, creating a sort of “complex” to accommodate an increasing number of babies and to house the infant nurse trainees who cared for Cradle babies.

An epidemic of gastroenteritis swept through the country in 1927, claiming the lives of 27 of the 270 babies admitted to The Cradle Nursery that year. Instead of closing the Nursery, Mrs. Walrath enlisted the help of renowned physicians to implement state-of-the-art, germicidal and anti-bacterial procedures. As a result, the infant mortality rate plummeted.

(Continued on page 2)
Celebrating Nine Decades of Excellence  
continued from page 1

The 1930s: Hollywood Connection & A New Home
To help promote adoption as a positive way of building families, Mrs. Walrath reached out to Hollywood. Celebrity couples began adopting Cradle babies. George Burns and Gracie Allen, right, adopted daughter Sandra in 1934 and son Ronnie in 1935. Also in 1935, Al Jolson and Ruby Keeler became parents to Al Jolson, Jr., whom his father called “Sonny Boy.”

By this time The Cradle Society had outgrown the confines of its three houses. On June 11, 1938, a groundbreaking took place for the handsome stone building that today still serves as The Cradle’s headquarters. The new facility at 2049 Ridge Avenue was dedicated, fittingly, on March 12, 1939.

The 1940s: The Hope Family Grows & Chandler House Opens
Dolores and Bob Hope adopted their second Cradle baby in 1940 (their first came home in 1939) and two more in 1946. As of January 1949, 5,646 babies had been cared for in the Nursery and 4,829 had been placed with families. Later that year, The Cradle opened Chandler House, a nonsectarian boarding home for expectant unmarried women. Located at 6100 N. Sheridan Road in Chicago, the home offered a supportive, communal living arrangement for 22 women and staff.

The 1950s: Leadership Change & Further Expansion
Florence Walrath retired as Managing Director in October 1950 and Hazel Ferguson became her successor. The first annual Elizabeth Arden Fashion Show Benefit for The Cradle also took place in 1950. Arden sponsored the fashion show for 17 years, until her death in 1966. It continued as a fundraiser until 1993.

In the spring of 1957, construction began on an annex to house a dormitory and classrooms for Cradle nurses and trainees. The building was dedicated on March 9, 1958. Later that year, The Cradle opened Chandler House, a nonsectarian boarding home for expectant unmarried women. Located at 6100 N. Sheridan Road in Chicago, the home offered a supportive, communal living arrangement for 22 women and staff.

The 1960s: Baby Boom
The Cradle Nursery admitted 2,621 babies over the course of the decade. In 1969 the Nursery experienced the highest number of admissions in its history: 304 babies – a record that stands today. One of those 304 babies became the son of Chicago Bears star running back, Gale Sayers.

The 1970s: The Cradle Turns 50
Due to the changing times, The Cradle closed Chandler House at the end of 1970. Hazel Ferguson also retired that year, after two decades as Managing Director. As of 1973, The Cradle’s 50th anniversary year, around 11,400 babies had been cared for in the Nursery and 10,500 had been placed for adoption.

The 1980s: Decline in Adoption Activity
Along with greater acceptance of single parenting, more effective means of birth control and other factors, fewer women were making adoption plans for their babies. Only 41 babies were admitted to the Nursery in 1989 – the lowest number to date in The Cradle’s history.

The 1990s: Resurgence
In 1992 there were only 37 placements. That year The Cradle Board of Directors undertook a major effort, known as Resurgence, to reverse this decline and reposition The Cradle as a national leader in the field of adoption and child welfare. Julie Tye was hired as President, a capital campaign was initiated and Cradle adoption practices were evaluated. An African American infant adoption program (later renamed The Sayers Center) was launched in 1994. The Cradle began to facilitate international adoptions and move toward a philosophy of openness in its domestic practice. The entire facility was renovated in 1999 and a new, updated nursery was installed.

The 2000s: ALP is Born
The Cradle launched AdoptionLearningPartners.org (ALP) in 2002 to bring high quality, online educational resources to adoptive families and adoption professionals, anywhere in the world. From 2002 to 2009, The Cradle Russia program placed Russian-born children with Cradle families in the U.S. The decade also saw a spike in Nursery admissions, with an average of 96 babies per year and 121 admissions in 2008 alone.

The Cradle Today
Two years into a new decade and The Cradle is still hard at work creating and sustaining nurturing families, while also contending with the present realities of a lingering slow economy, the lowest U.S. birth rate since 1920, and competition from internet adoption brokers. Despite these challenges, we remain committed to The Cradle’s founding mission of providing “needful care” and finding permanent homes for babies, while also growing and adapting our services to ensure that our families can access the support, education and resources they need, for a lifetime.

It was because of her benefactions that thousands of babies have benefited, not only those who have been entrusted to Cradle care, but babies everywhere. - from The Cradle Board of Directors’ memorial tribute

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

As The Cradle approaches its 90-year milestone in March, this December we celebrate the 20th anniversary of what has been known as The Cradle’s Resurgence Effort. In 1992, the Board implemented a bold strategic initiative that has led to an expansion of our adoption services, a sophisticated outreach program, and the development of the most respected online resource for adoption education.

In our cover story you can read about some of The Cradle’s key events, by decade, since our founding in 1923. Our annual “Year in Review” article below covers the highlights of 2012. Inside these pages are the heartfelt words of a birthmother, the story of a compassionate adoptee, and news about a Cradle mom and doctor turned author.

The Cradle is made up of extraordinary people, and has accomplished a great deal in its long history, but we still have much work to do.

We continue to push for enforcement of the 2005 Adoption Reform Act, which mandates that any provider of adoption services in Illinois is licensed and registered with the IRS as a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization. Regrettably, there are still many unlicensed operators in our state whose primary motivation is profit, not people.

In this increasingly challenging adoption environment, The Cradle will continue to advocate for those we have served from the very beginning: vulnerable children, expectant women and families. In the year ahead, we also plan to expand our post adoption services and resources for adoptive families.

You are an important part of our Cradle family – and our legacy. From everyone here in Evanston, we wish you and your family much happiness this holiday season and in the new year.

Best regards,

Julie S. Tye

THE YEAR in Review

The Cradle’s fiscal year runs from October 1 through September 30, so 2012 officially ended for us a few months ago. Although we have nearly completed the first quarter of FY13, we would like to share with you some highlights from the past year.

As in 2011, The Cradle experienced a combination of successes and challenges, within an increasingly difficult adoption environment. Domestic placements remained flat, while international adoptions continued to decline. Inquiries from women who were facing an unplanned pregnancy, however, were 26% higher in 2012 than the previous year.

The Cradle was licensed by the Indiana Department of Child Services in FY12 and opened an office in Merrillville, IN to serve expectant women in our neighboring state. To date, 10 babies born in Indiana have been placed with Cradle families.

Following are some key statistics from fiscal 2012:

- 1,044 expectant women contacted The Cradle for information or to make an appointment with a Cradle Birthparent Counselor.
- The Cradle Nursery provided a temporary, nurturing home for 68 babies – 41 boys and 27 girls – and monitored the care of an additional 22 babies who were placed directly from the hospital or from medical foster homes.
- 72 babies were placed through The Cradle’s domestic adoption programs: 53% were African American or biracial; 32% were Caucasian; 12% were Hispanic or Latino; and 3% were Asian.
- Our international home study program helped 15 children born in eight foreign countries come home with loving families in the U.S.
- Cradle counselors completed 82 home studies for prospective adoptive families; as of 9/30/12 there were 109 families on our domestic waiting list.
- More than 1,200 individuals received assistance through The Cradle’s Post Adoption Services department.
- AdoptionLearningPartners.org launched two new online courses, hosted five webinars and logged 41,465 total enrollments.

We look forward to a positive and productive 2013!
The 2012 Cradle Ball

“There is nothing in my life that isn’t informed by my children,” Jamie Lee Curtis told guests at the 18th annual Cradle Ball. The acclaimed actress, best-selling author and activist for children’s causes was the celebrity guest at this year’s Ball, held on Friday, September 28 at The Ritz-Carlton Chicago. Ms. Curtis also attended the 1998 Cradle Ball in celebration of the agency’s 75th anniversary.

More than 300 guests took part in the black-tie affair, which included a cocktail reception, dinner in The Ritz’s stunning 12th floor ballroom, dancing to the music of Rendezvous, and silent and live auctions for fabulous prizes. For the third year, Cradle Board members Erin Dickes and John Luce co-chaired the event. Frederick H. “Rick” Waddell, Chairman and CEO of Northern Trust Corporation, was the Ball’s Honorary Chair, and Northern Trust was the evening’s Presenting Sponsor.

Rick noted that Northern Trust has supported The Cradle for decades, and recognized the many company employees who are adoptive parents. “Every child deserves a family and a home,” Rick said, “and The Cradle helps make that possible.” He went on to present the 2012 Silver Cradle Awards to representatives from area companies that offer their employees adoption-related benefits.

Chicago radio personality and Cradle parent Kathy Hart, co-host of the top-rated Eric & Kathy Morning Show on 101.9 FM THE MIX, took up the gavel as our guest auctioneer. Two of the exceptional offerings up for bid were a week’s stay at a 16th century home in St. Andrews, Scotland and a week’s stay at a deluxe villa in Montego Bay, Jamaica.

The Cradle Ball, which has generated nearly $3.7 million since 1995 in support of The Cradle’s exemplary programs and services for children, expectant women, adoptive parents and adopted persons, is more than just a fundraiser. It is about promoting awareness of ethical adoption practice and celebrating adoptive families.

Cradle President Julie Tye thanked Jamie Lee Curtis for taking time away from her own family to be with our Cradle family at the Ball. “We have spent almost 90 years turning men and women into dads and moms,” Julie said in her remarks.

Curtis grew emotional talking about Annie and Tom, her children with husband Christopher Guest. “I am theirs, they are mine and that’s profoundly moving,” she stated. “But without the courage, grace and selflessness of their birthmothers, I couldn’t say that.”

The Cradle is profoundly grateful to Jamie Lee Curtis, Rick Waddell, Kathy Hart, The Cradle Ball Committee, all of our generous sponsors and auction donors, and everyone who helped to make the evening a great success.

*Other 2012 Silver Cradle recipients: Bank of America, CB Richard Ellis, Crate & Barrel, Deloitte LLP, Integrys Energy Group, Sidley Austin, State Farm, USG and W.W. Grainger.
Cradle parents Andi and Ned Herchenbach, right, with daughters Sarah (‘95) and Staci (‘98). Andi serves on The Cradle Board of Directors.

Daphne and Max Jones had fun dancing to Rendezvous. Daphne accepted a Silver Cradle Award on behalf of her company, Hospira.

Cathy and Bill Klettke traveled from Florida to attend the Ball with their Cradle baby, Michelle (‘88).

Jamie Lee Curtis graciously posed with many of our guests, including Jim and Lissa Christman.

2012 CRADLE BALL SPONSORS

Our sincere gratitude to our sponsors, whose generous support not only ensures the success of The Cradle Ball, but helps to preserve Cradle programs and services for future generations of children and families.

Presenting ($25,000 level)
Norah Trust

Silver ($5,000 level)
Abbott
AON
Bank of America
Baxter
CME Group

Bronze ($3,500 level)
Advocate Health Care
PwC

Nursery Angel ($1,500 level)
Barb & Peter Sereda

Friend of the Cradle ($1,000 level)

Silver Cradle Award Underwriter ($1,000 level)
Barr & Peter Sereda
2012 AUCTION, RAFFLE & SPECIAL PRIZE DONORS

THANK YOU to all of the generous businesses and individuals who donated gifts and services to Cradle Foundation events in 2012.

101.9fm THE MIX
2012 Ryder Cup Community Relations Committee
ABC Television Network
Adler Planetarium
Agave Logo Brands
Agostino’s Ristorante Italiano
Amenities Home Design
Anheuser Busch
Arlington Park
Lenore and Frank Arvia
AT&T
The Bazaar Inc.
Benjamin Restaurant
Bent Fork Bakery
Bernardi Securities, Inc.
Cam Bielat
Bluegrass Restaurant
Penelope Boardman
Charlie Boesel
Book Stall at Chestnut Court
Shane Brennan
Jennifer Brinn Designs
Broadway in Chicago
Libby Brombach
Brunswick Bowling & Billiards
Buffalo Grove Police Department
Builder’s Capital, LLC
Michelle and Kevin Cahoon
Carnivale
Catering by Michael’s
Chalet Nursery & Garden Shops
Chicago Architecture Foundation
Chicago Bears

Chicago Bulls
Chicago Children’s Choir
Chicago Cubs
Chicago Fly Fishing Outfitters, Ltd.
Chicago Shakespeare Theater
Chicago White Sox
Chopin Theatre
Claim Company
Kim and Jeff Cohen
Steve Cole
Mary and Jim Connelly
Cosi Inc.
Steve Cummings
Dance Center Evanston
Dark Matter Consulting
Day at the Races Committee
Deerfields Bakery
DeEtta’s Bakery
Deloitte LLP
DePaul University Merle Reskin Theatre
Destination Fitness
Erin and Scott Dickeys
Toni DiDonato
Judy and Dan Dorr
DPS Automotive LLC
Egea: The North Shore’s Wellness Spa
Eli’s Cheesecake World
Gary Eng, Five Delta Fox
Enterprise Rent-a-Car
Excel Electric, Inc.
First Look for Charity Committee
Susan Florsheim
The Four Seasons Resort Nevis
A Friend of The Cradle
Bobbi Ann and Barry Fulk
Chef Meg Galus
Geffen Playhouse
Susan Giffei and Scott Wiscomb
Glessner House Museum
Mike Giori
Jess Godwin
Goodman Theatre
Pam and Glenn Gray

Marisa and Ed Green
h.h. gregg – Geneva
Grow Books Press
Teresa Guerriero
The Guitar Works, Ltd.
Joe Haffner
Colleen Hallagan
Harbor Freight Tools
Hats by Carol
The Hearty Boys
Peter Hickey
Sarah and Scott Hirsch
Holidazzle
Nancy Iida
Illinois Sports Facilities Authority
Inovasi
iO Improv
J. Alexander’s Restaurant
James & Williams Jewelers
James Martin Associates, Inc.
Mr. and Mrs. Albert Jovellanos
Keevan Sadock Design
Kehoe Designs
Marge Kellen
Matt Keller
Kidsnips – Deerfield
Kidsnips – Wilmette
Chef David Koelling
Kohl Children’s Museum
Anastasia Kousakis
Telly Kousakis
Krugel Cobbles Inc.
Stephanie Kuecker Photography
Cathy and Frank Kuzel
La De Da!
Lake Forest Symphony
Lambrecht’s Jewelers, Inc.
Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises, Inc.
Dr. Adam Levin
Lifeline Theatre
Lil’ Kickers
Lincolnshire Marriott Resort
Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel
Radio host and Cradle mom, Kathy Hart, was our terrific guest auctioneer at the Ball.
Families Celebrate the Autumn Moon

Autumn Moon is a popular lunar harvest festival celebrated throughout Asia, and one of the most important holidays in the Chinese calendar. On October 13, Cradle families with children of Asian heritage gathered at Furama Restaurant in Chicago for our 8th annual Autumn Moon Festival.

The kids, many in traditional dress, enjoyed folding origami, doing scratch art and forming handmade clay pots, as well as playing games and drawing Chinese characters in a sandbox. After a delicious Asian lunch, our 111 guests were treated to thrilling entertainment, including a Taekwondo demonstration, a Sword Dance, Chinese opera and a Peacock Dance. The Truc Lam Buddhist Temple Lion Dance Team was back this year, in their fabulous lion costume, to delight the children and lead them in a lantern parade.


“Child of Mine” was created as a resource book for adoptive and transracial families, to teach parents how to facilitate healthy daily routines in skin care and hair care. Topics covered include acne, eczema, rashes, sun protection, scalp problems and hair loss. Proceeds from books sold at the signing event benefited The Cradle’s Sayers Center for African American Adoption. “Child of Mine” is available on Amazon.com for $12.99.

Sayers Center Families: Call for Volunteers

As we begin to celebrate our 90th anniversary at The Cradle, we know that understanding the strength of diversity is imperative. Through the years we have encouraged diversity and taken great pride in our efforts to be an organization which embraces it. Meeting the needs of the African American adoptive parents, birthparents, staff members and communities we serve is important to The Cradle.

Our commitment to diversity is essential to organizational success. Today we reach out to our Sayers Center families to encourage your involvement as volunteer speakers in area high schools through our Volunteers for Adoption Education program; as Cuddlers in The Cradle Nursery; or as members on one of the various boards that exist at The Cradle.

To learn more about these opportunities, please e-mail Nijole Yutkowitz at nyutkowitz@cradle.org.
Adopting Murphy

Turning 60 is a milestone for anyone, but Cradle adoptee Robert Kennedy received an especially momentous gift on his 60th birthday. It was December 2, 2008, and Robert was walking his dog Charlie in a park near his home north of Atlanta. They came upon another dog with severe head injuries, a bloody sledgehammer lying on the ground near the abused creature. Robert rushed the dog to an animal clinic and put the weapon in his car as evidence for when he called the police.

Although the dog was “all but dead” according to Robert, and the veterinarian, Dr. Pope, gave him only a 10% chance of surviving, Robert didn’t give up on him. “I can’t put him down on my birthday,” he thought. Because Robert had found the dog in Murphey Candler Park, he took to calling him “Murphy.”

Dr. Pope surgically repaired Murphy’s fractured skull and jaw and removed his badly damaged left eye. After an only eight-day recuperation period at the clinic – and frequent visits from Robert – Murphy was strong enough to be released to his rescuer’s care. Because Murphy was considered “live evidence” in the district attorney’s case, however, Robert was granted foster custody until after the trial and eventual conviction of Murphy’s previous owner. The man was sentenced to a year in jail for animal cruelty, and Robert was able to officially adopt Murphy.

This resilient and well-loved dog went on to live another four years, passing away in early November at age 13. Robert describes Murphy as very loyal and protective, and marvels at what a “cheerful” dog he was, despite everything he had been through.

Robert recently retired after nearly 35 years as Chief Financial Officer for Atlanta’s Capital City Club. He has two adult daughters and a granddaughter who will turn two in January. He always knew that he was adopted and said that his parents, Anamae and Bob, often read a book called The Chosen Baby to him.

When his work brought him to the Chicago area in 1993, Robert came to The Cradle for a visit. It was his first time back since his placement in 1948 and a very moving experience for him. Robert has been supporting The Cradle for more than 20 years. “God has been good to me,” he reflected. “Being adopted is an important aspect of my life, and I was taught early on that it is important to give back.”

We wish Robert, who turned 64 on December 2nd, a very Happy Birthday!

HELP MAKE 2013 a Great Year for Children

Your gift to The Cradle by December 31, 2012 may generate a tax deduction for you while helping The Cradle deliver its unparalleled services to children, women and families. While there is much uncertainty about what 2013 will bring for individuals tax-wise, we do know that charitable gifts given in 2012 will be fully tax-deductible for most donors.

Please consider a gift of cash or appreciated securities. If you have a stock that has appreciated in value over its original price and you’ve held it for at least one year, please consider donating shares of that stock or mutual fund today! For more information, please contact Brooke Voss, Cradle Foundation President, at 847.733.3204 or bvoss@cradle.org.

Thank you for caring about The Cradle and the people we serve!
NEWSWORTHY

CHINESE DELEGATION Visits The Cradle

On October 17, The Cradle hosted a thirty-member delegation including representatives from the China Center for Children's Welfare and Adoption (CCCWA) and orphanage directors from a dozen provinces in China. They were in the U.S. visiting a number of organizations across the country as part of the Orphan Nutrition project – a collaborative effort between the Joint Council on International Children's Services, the SPOON Foundation and Mead Johnson. Delegates toured The Cradle, learned about our history and present-day adoption practice, and visited the Nursery to hear about The Cradle’s infant care techniques from Victoria Brooks, Director of Nursing. Afterward, the group gathered in The Cradle dining room for lunch and a presentation of gifts – small, brightly painted clay pots handcrafted by children at the Autumn Moon Festival on October 13. Two of our distinguished guests included Lou Xiaoping, Deputy Director-General of Civil Affairs, Department of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, and Gan Weiwei, Deputy Director-General of CCCWA, pictured above in The Cradle courtyard.

HAGUE ACCREDITATION is Renewed

The Cradle received notification in November from the Council on Accreditation that our Hague Accreditation has been renewed through March 31, 2017. Concluded on May 29, 1993 in the Netherlands, the Hague Convention establishes international standards of practices for intercountry adoptions. The treaty was designed to ensure that intercountry adoptions take place in the best interests of the child, with respect to his or her fundamental rights. It also seeks to prevent the abduction, sale or trafficking of children. The United States signed the Convention in 1994, and it entered into force for the U.S. in April 2008. Hague Accreditation attests that The Cradle is in full compliance with Hague Convention standards. The reviewers expressed to us their sincere belief in the quality of The Cradle’s counseling staff and our approach to adoption practice. AdoptionLearningPartners.org offers a five-course “Hague Package” of training on topics required for international adoption by the Hague Convention.

ONGOING SUPPORT for Adoptive Famillies

Invaluable time is spent preparing to become adoptive parents. The Cradle helps many families each year learn about the lifelong commitment that is adoption.

But support at The Cradle doesn’t need to end once an adoption is final. Whether you are currently facing parenting challenges or not, you can feel comfort in the fact that The Cradle will continue to support your family as you grow.

Here are some common issues and ways we can offer help:

When is the right time to tell your child she was adopted?

Sometimes parents find themselves waiting for just the “right time” to talk to their child about adoption. They may be trying to protect their child from her own sad feelings about adoption, or from a story that is difficult to share. Some parents just aren’t sure how to start the conversation.

Talking to your child about adoption helps her understand her story. And having a complete story allows your child to make sense of her world, to feel attached to you, and to build her identity. Adoption Learning Partners’ Let’s Talk Adoption provides information on the importance of discussing adoption and strategies to answer questions.

Identity Formation

By the time children reach preteen or teenage years, many parents no longer think about the role adoption has in what kids are thinking and feeling. Just because your child isn’t talking about it, however, doesn’t mean she’s not thinking about it.

As children mature, their understanding of adoption becomes more nuanced. Questions and concerns may be more difficult for parents to answer or even hear. With a better understanding of the role adoption plays in identity formation through the stages of development, parents are better prepared to address these issues with their children.

ALP’s new course, Adopted: The Identity Project, provides greater insight into the experiences of an adopted person – through the voices of adopted individuals.

Check out www.adoptionlearningpartners.org for a complete list of ALP courses and webinars. In addition, The Cradle’s post adoption counseling team offers one-on-one sessions with adoptees. If you would like guidance on your specific family situation, contact us at 847.475.5800.
Parents' Workshops at The Cradle

Strategies for Sensory and Regulatory Difficulties in Children
Saturday, January 19, 2013, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Led by Dan Griffith, Ph.D., Clinical Pediatric Psychologist, this workshop will help participants identify sensory and regulatory problems in children, describe the impact these problems may have on familial relationships, and suggest strategies to address these difficulties.

2 hours of DCFS Foster Care Training/Hague Aligned

Talking to Your Child About Adoption
Saturday, March 2, 2013, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Join Dori Fujii, LCSW as she discusses the ins and outs of talking to your child about adoption. Dori will cover when to start the conversation, how to share difficult stories and answer difficult questions, and how your child’s understanding of adoption changes as they grow.

2 hours of DCFS Foster Care Training/Hague Aligned

Caring for Afro-Textured Hair and Skin: Practical Advice for Parents of African-American and Biracial Children
Saturday, March 30, 2013, 9 a.m. to 12 Noon

Join us for a hands-on seminar where participants will learn basic hair care techniques such as shampooing, conditioning and styling, as well as the differences between naturally textured and chemically treated hair styles. Instructors will also provide information on caring for the skin of African and African American children, and addressing dry skin and eczema.

3 hours of DCFS Foster Care Training

Workshops are open to the community. Fees: $20 per person per workshop, $10 for second family member; non-refundable. Pre-registration and pre-payment are required. Register online at www.cradle.org/adoption-workshops or by calling 847.733.3208.

Message from a Cradle Birthmother

Earlier this year, a couple made the heartbreaking decision to entrust their baby girl to another family. The baby had significant special needs, and while they loved her very much, they knew they couldn’t give her the life they dreamed for her. Following is a note the birthmom sent to her Cradle counselor a few months after the placement:

I cannot convey to you or anyone else in words to make them understand the agony we were in over the whole situation. We just wanted our baby to have the very best opportunities, care, support and love... and we knew we couldn’t provide all of that and it hurt even more.

You are a wonderful, caring, loving person and we could not have gotten through this heart-breaking time in our lives without you and your organization’s help. You never gave up on us... even when things seemed like they were not going to fall into place.

I’ve always believed that everything happens for a reason. Looking back, I realize that she was never meant for us. There were too many signs along the way. I was just a vessel to bring her to her Mommy and Daddy that God hand picked just for her. I am honored to have played such a small part in her beautiful journey. She is where she belongs... and she is loved!

The birthmom also wrote her daughter a very touching poem, which she gave to the adoptive parents. While it is too long to publish in its entirety, here is an excerpt from “Meant for Someone Else”:

She is not meant for you, My Child, said the voice from above. You see, Dear One, she is a gift but meant for someone else. I’ve planned this perfectly Just you wait and see!

She will be loved beyond words and get the care she desperately needs. She will fill the void in their hearts and she’ll want for absolutely nothing.

Miles and miles away there waits a family. They love her just as much. They too have waited a very long time to call her “mine.”

And as she grows, laughs and plays I’ll know that this choice was right.

And when I miss her most and the pain is just too much I’ll whisper to myself She was not meant for me she was meant for someone else.
CRADLE Calendar

**WINTER 2013**

**01/17**  PARENTING AN ADOPTED CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
ALP Webinar
7-8 p.m. CT; Q&A at 8 p.m.
adoptionlearningpartners.org

**01/19**  STRATEGIES FOR SENSORY & REGULATORY DIFFICULTIES IN CHILDREN
Parenting Workshop*
The Cradle, Evanston
9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

**02/08**  FIRST LOOK FOR CHARITY
McCormick Place, Chicago
7 p.m. to 11 p.m.

**03/02**  TALKING TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT ADOPTION
Parenting Workshop*
The Cradle, Evanston
9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

**03/30**  CARING FOR AFRO-TEXTURED HAIR AND SKIN
Parenting Workshop*
The Cradle, Evanston
9 a.m. to 12 Noon

*Open to the community. Fee: $20 per person per workshop, $10 for second family member; non-refundable. Register online at www.cradle.org/adoption-workshops or by calling 847.733.3208.

Happy Holidays!