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## Adoptees Have Answers

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### AHA Webinars

[AHA August Webinar with Deborah Jiang Stein and Carrie Blesener](#)

### AHA Support Groups

[New Online Group](#)  
[Transracial and International Group](#)  
[AAABCD Group](#)  
[Middle and High School Groups](#)

### Community Events

[Four Destinies](#)  
[Upcoming Sun-Mee Chomet Shows](#)  
[Orphan Train Riders of NY Celebration](#)  
[Concerned United Birth Mothers Retreat](#)  
[St. John's University Adoption Conference](#)  
[Good Grief: Symposium in Canada](#)

### In the News

[Steve Jobs, Adoptee, CEO of Apple Steps Down](#)  
[Amy Anderson and Modern Family TV Show](#)  
[A Birth Certificate is a Factual Document](#)  
[Access to Birth Certificates in Rhode Island](#)  
[Guatemala Judge Orders US Family to Return Child](#)  
[Guatemala Issues Decrees to Process Some Adoptions](#)  
[Who Made Me Who I Am Article](#)

### Arts

[The Best I Can Be Book](#)  
[Mary Gauthier](#)  
[Swing by Alan Gerstel](#)

### Resources

[Adoption and Addiction Video](#)  
[Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute New Report](#)

## Quick Links

[AHA Website](#)

[AHA Support Groups](#)

[AHA YouTube](#)

[AHA Facebook](#)

[AHA Twitter](#)

Please consider helping us continue our work on behalf of adoptees and fosteres by making a donation.



## AHA Webinar - Registration closes on Tuesday 9/13

**RESCHEDULED AHA Webinar: Thursday, September 15, 2011, 12:00 to 1:30 PM CST**  
***Dealing with the Tough Stuff: Adoptees and Resiliency***, Deborah Jiang Stein and Carrie Blesener, presenters



Deborah Jiang Stein is a writer, national conference keynote speaker, and often speaks in prisons around the U.S. Deborah was born in prison herself, then entered the foster care system and was later adopted. She shares stories about her experiences and blogs for *The Huffington Post*. Carrie Blesener is a clinical social worker, currently counseling patients on dialysis. She's been involved in the adoption world for many years, co-facilitating the Adoptees MN support group and participating in adoption reform and education. Stein and Blesener will discuss the complex and sometimes difficult experiences that adoptees may face when learning about their backgrounds, sometimes reflecting on their own personal stories including reuniting with birth family. They will also share some resources for handling challenging situations. Register [here](#).

## AHA Support Group Updates

**AHA Introduces New Online Support Group**

Beginning in October, AHA will introduce a new online support group open to all adoptees over age 18. Please stay tuned for announcements. In the meantime, please contact [Amy Fjellman](#) for more information.

**Transracial and International Group**

This group will be discontinued. Participants will be encouraged to join the new online support group. Please contact [Amy Fjellman](#) for more information.

**AAABCD Group**

This group will be merging with the **Potluck Dinner and Talking Circle Group** hosted by the First Nations Orphan Association and co-sponsored by AHA. Dr. Darla Brom, facilitator of the former AAABCD group, will join Sandy White Hawk in facilitating of the monthly gathering of Native American adoptees and fostered individuals at the All Nations Indian Church in Minneapolis. See flyer for details.

**Middle School and High School Groups**

These groups are back from summer break and will resume in October.

**All other groups will meet as usual.** Please visit the [AHA website](#) for dates and times.



## Community Events

**Four Destinies**

Mu Theater presents [Four Destinies](#) by Katie Hae Leo October 15-30, 2011. The classic tension between free will and destiny underscores this potent satire of adoption in America. Destiny Jones is a Korean adoptee raised in Minnesota. But Destiny Jones is also an African American adoptee, a Guatemalan-born adoptee, and an adopted Caucasian boy. Four different actors portray the same character on the same day with the same family. To further complicate the plot, a playwright named Katie Leo keeps

interrupting! She wants to make sure she represents every adoptee ever born, as well as give all of her characters exactly what they want. What happens when the four Destinies do get what they want? In this exploration of fate, DNA, arrival stories, and the families that love them, the answers are never simple.

Mu Theater will be hosting a community forum "What If: An Adoptee Dilemma" on September 25, 2011 at 4:30 at Macalester College's John B. Davis Auditorium. The panel will explore topics of interchangeability, destiny, race, sexuality, and family from an adoptee point of view. Panelists include Jae Ran Kim, Oh Myo Kim, Shawyn Lee, Shanda Stracek, and Robert O'Connor, with Soojin Pate as moderator.

**Upcoming Sun-Mee Chomet Shows**

*The Burial at Thebes* at the Guthrie Theater will run October 1-November 6 (preview performance Sept. 24). Sun-Mee Chomet stars in this adaptation of Sophocles' *Antigone* as lead heroine who must answer the question, "To whom does loyalty belong? To one's family and cultural practices or to the law decreed by the state?" According to Ms. Chomet, "As an adoptee, it is quite interesting exploring the internal life of a woman who has been orphaned and has deep loyalties and conflicted feelings about her blood family." Single tickets are on sale now and start at \$24. Please visit [The Guthrie](#) website for more details.

On Saturday, November 12 at The Pillsbury House Theater at 9pm, Sun-Mee Chomet will also be premiering a new piece featuring her writing about reuniting with her birth family last year. It will be incorporating monologues, visual projections, photographs, music and movement. Ms. Chomet explains the concept behind her performance: "The focus of the piece is how, as an adoptee, I always longed to find my birth family. But once it happened, I was side-blinded by trying to navigate the uneven terrain of integrating my ideas of history, family, who I'm supposed to be as a Korean and accepting who and where I am as an adult adoptee." At 8 PM, free food made by local chefs

will be served in the lobby and the show begins at 9pm. Please visit the [Pillsbury House](#) website for more information.

#### **Orphan Train Riders of New York Reunion**

On Saturday, October 1, The St. Francis Center in Little Falls, MN welcomes the public to the 51st Annual reunion of Minnesota's orphan train riders and their families. Keynote speakers are Harvey and Maxine Ronglien, historians for the Minnesota State Public School for Dependant and Neglected Children in Owatonna, MN. There will be a ham dinner, silent auction and many opportunities to interact with the orphan train riders. Registration is \$20 per person and is due September 14th. Click [here](#) for the registration form.

#### **Concerned United Birthmothers, Inc. (CUB) Retreat**

The CUB Retreat will be held October 14-16, 2011. "It is a unique experience for birthparents, adoptees, adoptive parents and others touched by adoption. It is not just another conference. There are always interesting and insightful speakers, both professional and those speaking from the heart about their own experiences with adoption. There will be great entertainment and lots of laughs as well as tears." Click [here](#) for information on how to register.

#### **St. John's University Adoption Conference**

The 7th biennial conference will be held October 18-20 at St. John's University in Manhattan, New York. The theme this year is *Best Interests of the Child: Race, Religion and Rescue in Adoption*. For the latest information and how to register, check out the [website](#).

#### **Good Grief: A Weekend Symposium in Canada**

Forget Me Not Family Society will be hosting a weekend workshop, October 14-16, in Richmond, B.C. Joe Soll, LCSW, DAPA, will be presenting. Joe is the author of *Adoption Healing...A Path to Recovery*, and co-author of *Evil Exchange* and *Fatal Flight*. He is also a psychotherapist, lecturer and director/co-founder of Adoption Crossroads, an international, non-profit organization. Click [here](#) to download the registration form.

## In The News

#### **Steven Jobs, Wizard Founder and CEO of Apple Computer (Adoptee) Steps Down**

PRESS RELEASE: Letter from Steve Jobs

August 24, 2011-To the Apple Board of Directors and the Apple Community:

"I have always said if there ever came a day when I could no longer meet my duties and expectations as Apple's CEO, I would be the first to let you know. Unfortunately, that day has come. I hereby resign as CEO of Apple. I would like to serve, if the Board sees fit, as Chairman of the Board, director and Apple employee." Witness Steven Jobs' 2005 [Commencement Address](#) at Stanford University (on YouTube) -- his adoption story, getting fired from the company he created, being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer -- and why these were the three most powerful events in his life. Adoptees Have Answers wishes Mr. Jobs the very best in his next adventure. To echo his own words, "Keep looking. Don't settle." Click [here](#) to read about Steven Jobs' birthfather.

#### **Amy Anderson and Modern Family**

SOURCE: KoreAm Magazine - "The wildly popular 'Modern Family' sitcom has cast the 4-year-old daughter of Korean American comedienne Amy Anderson. Aubrey Anderson-Emmons will play Lily, the adopted Vietnamese daughter of Mitchell (Jesse Tyler Ferguson) and Cameron (Eric Stonestreet), replacing twin baby actresses Jaden and Ella Hiller. Showrunner Steve Levitan lauded the young actress, calling her a 'natural.'" For those who don't know, Amy Anderson is a Minnesota adoptee now living in California and making people laugh in many states. Check [here](#) for full article.

#### **A Birth Certificate is a Factual Document**

SOURCE: Sidney Morning Herald - "Should a [birth certificate](#) record a child's genetic and biological history, even if the people who brought them into the world hate each other, live on opposite sides of the planet, spent just one crazy week together, or arranged conception like a business deal through a newspaper advertisement?" A [court case](#) raises interesting questions about what it means to be recognised as a parent."

### **Access to Birth Certificates in Rhode Island**

SOURCE: Rhode Island State Government - "Amendments to state law (R.I. Gen. Laws Sections 15-7, 23-3-1, 23-3-15) passed in July 2011 will allow Rhode Island-born adoptees age 25 and older to receive non-certified copies of their original, unaltered birth certificates from the State Office of Vital Records. (Non-certified copies of vital records are for informational purposes only and cannot be used for legal proof of identity, citizenship, or as a substitute for an official birth certificate.) The State Office maintains sealed files of pre-adoption birth certificates for all adopted children who were born in Rhode Island. Adoptees may request copies of their certificates beginning March 1, 2012. By law, the State Office cannot release requested certificates until July 2012." Click [here](#) for more information.

### **Guatemala Judge Orders American Couple to Return Child**

SOURCE: CNN World - "A Guatemalan judge has ordered an American couple to give their adopted daughter back to her birth mother. Judge Angelica Noemi Tellez Hernandez said in her ruling, made public this week, that the girl belongs with her mother, identified as Elizabeth Rodriguez Morales, who is supported by Survivors Foundation, a Guatemala City-based rights organization. The girl was kidnapped in 2006, according to the group, which provided a copy of the judge's ruling. She was subsequently adopted and taken to live in the United States. The girl is currently thought to be living in Liberty, Missouri, according to the judge's order. The judge said the girl's passport should be canceled." Click [here](#) to read more.

### **Guatemalan Issues Decrees to Process Some Adoptions**

SOURCE: Star Tribune World - "Guatemala has issued a decree that could speed up dozens of adoptions by U.S. couples that have been stuck in limbo since the Central American country suspended adoptions in 2007 amid allegations of fraud and even baby theft. The decree says that parents whose adoptions were halted midway by the ban can complete the process if they prove a 'prolonged' relationship with the child and that they were not responsible for any fraud, among other requirements. The possibility of a domestic adoption must also be ruled out." Click [here](#) to learn more.

### **Who Made Me Who I Am Article**

SOURCE: The Independent - "The "Nature versus Nurture" debate is never far from your mind when you're adopted. Most children spend their childhoods (and sometimes their adulthoods) being told they have their dad's brains, their mum's sociability and/or a whole host of other traits. But adopted people often stop to wonder where they get their characteristics and how different they might be if they'd grown up with their birth parents." Click [here](#) to read more.



## **Arts**

### ***The Best I Can Be***

This [book](#) is about a young adopted teen with fetal alcohol effects who challenges the world to peer inside her life and brain. Through her writings the readers are taken on a life changing journey that will impact their thinking about how to help and understand children with brain damage due to fetal alcohol exposure. This book has now been translated into Russian and Ukranian.

### **Mary Gauthier**

SOURCE: Mary Gauthier Website - Mary is a folk-singer songwriter who was adopted. She has a new album called *The Foundling*. "The story of *The Foundling* resonated across the country, literally, and was named in many year-end Top Album lists. In the *Los Angeles Times*, music writer Randy Lewis picked the album and noted: 'The acclaimed Louisiana singer and songwriter tackles the most powerful story of all - that of her own life - in this extraordinarily powerful and clear-eyed song cycle encompassing issues of abandonment, adoption, identity, blame, forgiveness and love set to music as richly diverse as the thematic content.'" Click [here](#) to learn more about her music and tour dates.

### **Swing by Alan Gerstel**

SOURCE: Amazon - "Alan Gerstel was adopted soon after birth and suffered the pangs of rejection through his formative years even though he was raised in a warm, loving household. That nagging rejection prompted the unrelenting search for his birth parents when he reached his late 20's. To compensate for feelings of rejection, many adoptees are known to fantasize that their birth parents were famous people. Alan's decades-long investigation revealed that his birth father certainly fit the

bill. Louis Prima was a major star and a married man when he had a brief relationship with a pretty, young woman who yearned to be a singer in his band. Alan was the product of their short-lived liaison. [SWING](#) is a tale of dogged determination. It is a story of private investigators, of payoffs and bribes, of good people and some very bad people."

## Resources

### Adoption and Addiction Video

Check out this cool [video](#) presented by Paul Sunderland on *Adoption and Addiction*.

### New Report on Adult Adoptees

Reprinted from the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Research Institute newsletter: A new report, *Asian adolescent and young adult adoptees' psychological well-being: Examining the mediating role of marginality*," is now available for download. The [report](#) found that "supports for racial socialization - preparation to cope with prejudice and discrimination - decreased adoptees' feelings of marginality and increased self-esteem; however, ethnic socialization - education about culture of own ethnic group - was not associated with feelings of marginality and self-esteem."

Adoptees Have Answers | 430 Oak Grove St. Suite 404  
Minneapolis MN 55403  
[info@aha.mn](mailto:info@aha.mn) | 612-746-5133  
<http://www.aha.mn>

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