



IOWANS FOR ADOPTION

Promoting adoption as a POSITIVE, parenting option.

The Connection 2019 Year In Review



IFA Gala Recap

Iowans for Adoption successfully hosted its third annual Gala on September 5th, 2019 at Glen Oaks Golf & Country Club. The night started with an opening address from Renee Hardman (middle right photo), who highlighted how we all need to work together to help children and continuously find ways to volunteer. As Hardman stressed, it takes a village. Our keynote speaker and IFA board member, Rusty Johnson (top photo), transitioned to his story growing up in the foster care system and how more people are needed to become foster parents. Like Hardman, Johnson agreed it truly takes a village and addressed that IFA is working diligently to educate others about adoption as a positive option to reduce the number of children who end up in foster care due to abuse and neglect.



Following the keynote address, the IFA board awarded Diane Crookham-Johnson (middle left photo) from Musco Lighting as the 2019 IFA Adoption-Friendly Business Recipient. Musco received our award due to its role in giving adoptive families paid leave and equal parental leave. We will continue to award Iowa businesses who provide significant adoption benefits to families.



A Note From Our President



As an adopted individual, a mom of two children (one of whom is adopted), an adoption researcher and a former licensed foster parent, it is an extreme privilege to serve as your volunteer Executive Director for eight consecutive years. Our ongoing successes are heart-warming, inspiring and congruent with our mission, vision and goals. Over the years, **our work** has touched countless lives across the state and the country. I am pleased to report that IFA exceeded its educational, advocacy and service goals via fiscal responsibility, dedication and passion from our volunteer board, committee members and you! Our successes are highlighted throughout this newsletter. Please know that **through your support**, we have helped:

- many families adopt children through foster care, private domestic and international measures
- many individuals become licensed foster parents
- countless people learn about adoption and foster care
- positively impact policies relating to many facets of adoption

We will continue similar strategic goals for 2020 because our personal convictions remain grounded in the belief that **all people deserve** a permanent, safe, loving, nurturing, and stable home that contributes to their positive health and well-being.

Please join us by attending our events, distributing our information or sharing your adoption stories! We have many exciting endeavors planned and are truly grateful for your continued support!

~Diana L. Lang, Ph.D.



Gingerbread Run/Walk

We held our annual Gingerbread Run/Walk for Adoption on October 12th in Ankeny. Despite the cold weather, we had a great turnout and many participants were willing to run or walk the 5K that morning. Thank you to everyone for coming out to support adoption. Check out our news story [here](#) and stay tuned for more details on our 2020 events later this spring!



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS & SPONSORS!

Iowans for Adoption, Adoption Associates of Iowa, AMP-Achieving Maximum Potential, YSS, The Adoption Club at Iowa State University, Greater Iowa Credit Union, Dreams Unlimited Mobile Sound Services, Mike and Anne Marchetti and Family and The National Center for Adoption.

Our Mission

To promote adoption through education, research and collaboration.

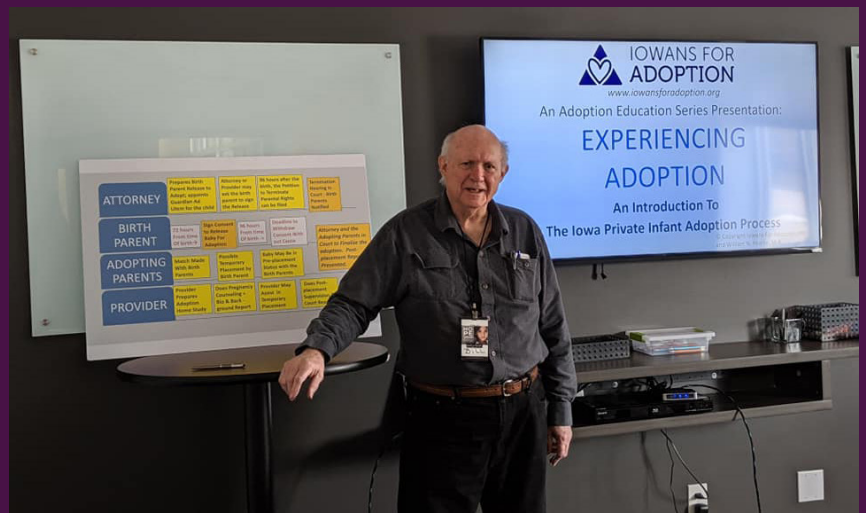
Our Vision

To serve as a networking and advocacy forum for those who value and support adoption and to support all members of the adoption triad. Promote adoption as a preventative measure for improving children's and families' overall well-being.

Our Goal

To ensure that all children have a permanent, safe, loving, nurturing and stable home that contributes to their positive health and well-being.

Experiencing Adoption



Bill Pearce presented the "Iowa Adoption 101" training twice during 2019. Attendees learned about the basic legal processes of infant adoption, legal terminology and other aspects of adoption. We are truly honored to have Bill on our board due to his background and expertise! He has done amazing work for adoption in Iowa. To schedule a free training, please email us at info@IowansForAdoption.org.

Sen. Chuck Grassley Supports IFA



We are pleased to announce our new board members:

- Paul Denbow, manager at Starbucks & adoption advocate
- Danielle Baltimore, an adopted individual and honors student majoring in economics at the University of Iowa's Tippie School of Business
- Jerry Foxhoven, an attorney, former director of the Iowa Department of Human Services, former executive director of the Neal and Bea Smith Legal Clinic and former director of the Joan and Lyle Middleton Center for Children's Rights.

IFA board members read the following message from Iowa Senator Chuck Grassley during the 2019 Gala. "Thank you to Iowans for Adoption for [raising] awareness of the needs of foster youth in our state. This organization is performing very valuable work to educate others about adoption, including for parents who may not be ready or able to parent yet, for those who are waiting to adopt, for those who have adopted and for those who are waiting to be adopted from foster care.

Iowans for Adoption is also working to educate others about the need for more high-quality foster parents in Iowa and across the U.S. Research shows that providing the option of adoption to those who are not ready, willing or able to parent can reduce the risks of poverty for birth parents who opt to place their infant for adoption and for their infant.

In 2009, I launched the bipartisan Senate Caucus on Foster Youth as a call to action for lawmakers in Congress. Through my work on the caucus, I've had the opportunity to hear firsthand what children in foster care need. They need love, support, safety and permanency. They need a family. I salute all those who dedicate their time and resources to help these kids.

Last year, Congress passed the Family First Prevention Services Act, which will allow states to receive federal reimbursement for services to keep kids safely with their parents. These services include substance abuse treatment programs and directly ties into Iowans for Adoption's main goal.

While this is an important first step, more work remains. Moving forward, I will continue to work to find better solutions and secure better outcomes for youth in foster care. As your senator, it's important that I hear from you, so please continue to keep in touch!"

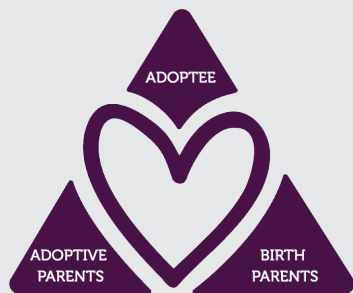
-Senator Chuck Grassley
Chairman
Senate Finance Committee



Thank You!

We are extremely grateful for everyone who has continuously helped promote adoption in Iowa. We also would like to thank our volunteers and board members for helping IFA get to where we are today. We couldn't have done it without your support. We can't wait to see what 2020 has in store for us!



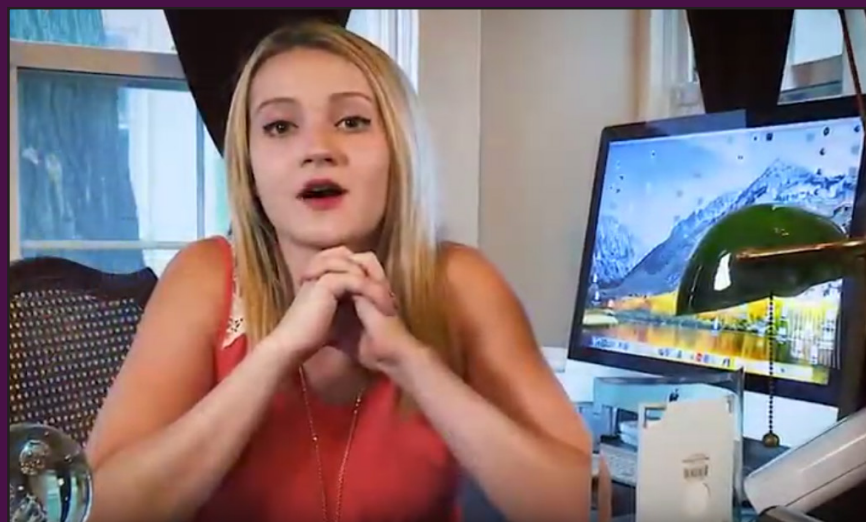


Birth Certificates to Adult Adoptees

Many adults whose adoptions were finalized in Iowa are continuing to support the passage of **HF746** and **SF621**. These bills would unseal and provide adopted adults copies of their original birth certificates within certain stipulations. Thank you to the Iowa Adoptee and Family Coalition for their continued work on this. We urge you to contact your legislator if this appeals to you. If you need help finding your specific legislator, click [here](#).

Publicity/News

We recently launched two public service announcements this fall throughout various stations in Iowa to help educate individuals who may not be able to, willing to or wanting to parent. Click either video below to view the whole PSA or feel free to share them on social media platforms. To view more adoption news in Iowa, check out our Facebook page [here](#) or the news section of our website [here](#).



2019 Policy Update

Honorary Board Member, Erin Kiernan, and many adoption advocates continue to support Iowa **SF 234** and **HF30**. These bills require an employer under Code chapter 91A to treat an employee who adopts a child in the same manner as an employee who is the biological parent of a newborn child for purposes of employment policies, benefits and protections for the first year of the adoption. To read more about this specific legislation, click [here](#).

Federal law requires employers to ensure up to **12** weeks of unpaid adoption and maternity leave through the Family and Medical Leave Act. A few states, including California, Rhode Island and New Jersey, have included adoption in their paid parental leave programs.

Thank you to Senator Brad Zaun and Representative Bruce Hunter for their work on this. Feel free to contact either legislator to voice your support.



IOWANS FOR ADOPTION

Fourth Annual Gala

BUFFET DINNER, SILENT AUCTION,
LIVE DESSERT AUCTION & CASH BAR

Friday, June 12th
Doors open at 5:30
Program & Auction: 6 p.m.

Courtyard by Marriott
2405 SE Creekview Dr.
Ankeny, IA 50021

Table of 8: \$320
Single Ticket: \$45

Featuring Keynote Speaker Tom Vilsack



Tom Vilsack was born in a Pennsylvania orphanage where his birth mom resided until his birth. Bud and Dolly Vilsack adopted him four months later. Vilsack has dedicated the majority of his life to public service as a politician, a lawyer and a champion for strengthening the nation's agriculture industry.

After graduating from law school, Vilsack moved to Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, where his wife, Christie, grew up. This is where he launched his successful career as a trial lawyer. After the murder of the Mt. Pleasant mayor in 1986, Vilsack stepped up to serve five years as the mayor until he was elected to the Iowa Senate.

Currently, Vilsack serves as president and CEO of the U.S. Dairy Export Council, where he provides strategic leadership of USDEC's global research activities, regulatory affairs and trade policy initiatives. He took the position in February 2017 after serving eight years as the nation's 30th Secretary of Agriculture. Prior to his appointment, he served two terms as the Governor of Iowa and six years in the Iowa State Senate. He has two adult sons, two daughters-in-law and five grandchildren.

www.IowansForAdoption.org

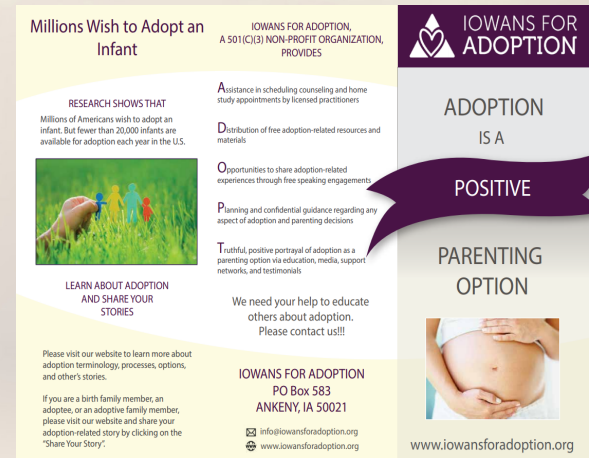
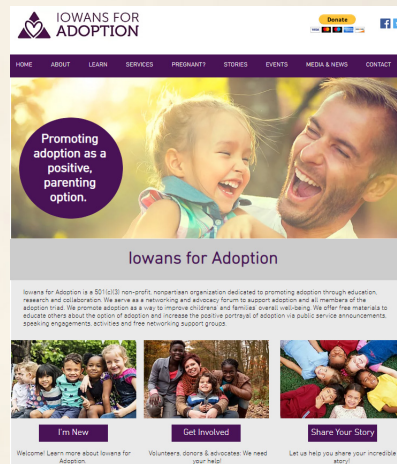


Birth Mom Resources

We are collaborating with Iowa organizations to create birth mom support/networking/counseling, health care, scholarships and possibly wrap-around services. Stay tuned for more details!

New Website & Brochures

Thank you to our technology and marketing coordinator, Natalie Mahoney, for revamping our website this spring. The new, secure site is filled with updated content, resources, brochures and adoption stories. Check it out at www.IowansForAdoption.org. Additionally, we created brochures and disseminated them to local organizations that serve individuals who may be evaluating their options for parenting and adoption. Brochures can be downloaded [here](#) or contact us to obtain hard copies.



We Need Your Help!

We are forming steering committees to help with the following:

- Marketing/PR for all of our events
- Running the registration sites for both the Gala and Run
- Managing social media pages
- Collaborating with others for grant-writing, grant-funding, publicity and educational efforts
- Selling tickets and securing auction items for the Gala
- Speaking for our adoption events
- Videotaping, editing and posting adoption stories
- Assisting with advocacy and building a champions program to support adoption legislation

Please contact us at info@IowansForAdoption.org if you can assist with any of these. All help will be appreciated. To **DONATE** to IFA, please go to our website and click the donate button at the top. Thank you!



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