

# Adoptions Unlimited, Inc.

**2004 Annual Report**



Finding Loving Homes for Illinois Youth and Teens

# Message from the Chairman and the Executive Director



Dear Friends,

The goal of Adoptions Unlimited, Inc. is to help children in the state's child welfare system find permanent families. We're pleased to say we had great success at achieving this goal in fiscal year 2004. Through our program, the Adoption Information Center of Illinois (AICI), we assisted in the effort to provide permanency for 203 waiting children who were registered with us. And sixty-seven percent of these children were ten or older, a population for whom it is often difficult to find permanent families.

FY04 was a productive year in many other ways, too. In our role as administrators of the AICI, we worked more closely than ever with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and private agencies to review cases and ensure that any child needing the AICI's services received them.

We took on new duties as well. DCFS selected us to serve as the Illinois response team for the recruitment campaign created by the Children's Bureau's Collaboration to AdoptUSKids in conjunction with the Ad Council. The



response team's job is to contact, inform, and encourage Illinois families who inquire about adoption as a result of the campaign.

We used new and creative approaches to promote adoption during the past fiscal year. One example was our participation in the 74th Annual Bud Billiken

Parade, which celebrates Chicago's African-American youth. Adoption was the theme of the WGN-TV float, and our staff distributed information along the parade route about how to adopt a waiting child.



Our work did not go unnoticed in FY04. During the fiscal year, the AICI received the Angels in Adoption Award from the United States Congressional Coalition on Adoption. In presenting the award, the coalition praised the AICI as an organization that has significantly contributed to changing the lives of children in need.

We want to thank everyone—donors, staff, and our partners at public and private agencies—who has helped us change the lives of children in need. FY04 was a good year for us, and we look forward to finding loving homes for Illinois youth and teens for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Merri Dee  
Chairman, Board of Directors

Marilyn Panichi  
Executive Director



# Our Mission



The mission of Adoptions Unlimited, Inc. (AUI) is to secure and support adoptive families for children in need of permanent homes. AUI is motivated by the belief that every child deserves a loving family. We use our professional expertise and technical resources to be a leader in:

- recruiting families for adoption and foster care;
- linking interested families and waiting children;
- providing both pre- and post-adoption support; and
- disseminating information about emerging adoption issues to adoptive families, child welfare agencies, and the public.



## FY04 Highlights



In fiscal year 2004, Adoptions Unlimited carried out its mission through the operation of the Adoption Information Center of Illinois (AICI) for the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

The AICI served 10,848 children and families in FY04 through its Adoption Listing Services (ALS) and Information and Referral Services. Following are some of the highlights illustrating how the AICI helped AUI fulfill its mission and goals:

### Recruiting Families for Adoption and Foster Care

The AICI referred 2,126 families for adoption or foster care licensing in FY04. We recruited these families through our publications and web site, through our media outreach programs, and through our network of contacts at social service agencies and organizations.

### Linking Families with Waiting Children

In FY04, we helped introduce children to families through our photolistings book, which profiled the waiting children available in Illinois. We distributed more than 1,000 copies of this book each month to caseworkers and licensed families registered to use our services. We also suggested 1,291 matches between the children and registered families. Our efforts paid off. By the end of FY04, 203 of the children registered with our ALS had found permanent families.

### Supporting Families

We provided support to families by staying in contact with them as they went through the adoption and foster care licensing process. In FY04, we made more than 14,800 follow-up calls to referred families to ensure the process was moving ahead. We supported families after adoption through our Post Adoption and Guardianship Information

**"Thank God for AICI and its wonderful staff. Without them, we would never have found the children who were always meant to be ours!" - Mrs. Maria Thomas**

Services, which responded to 375 inquiries with answers to questions or links to support services in local communities.

### Disseminating Information about Adoption

In FY04, we educated thousands of families about adoption through our bi-monthly *Adopt Me* publication. We alerted hundreds of workers to emerging adoption issues, especially those regarding teen adoptions, in our *AICI News* newsletter. And, with the help of our media partners, we reached millions in the general public with our waiting child and adoption awareness messages.



# Adoption Listing Services

Connecting waiting children with adoptive families requires several important steps. First, the general public must be made aware that Illinois children are waiting for adoptive homes. Then, once families have stepped forward and become licensed, they need access to information about the individual children available for adoption. Finally, the children and families must be matched in a way that ensures a good fit.

The AICI's Adoption Listing Services (ALS) address all of these important needs by:

- building awareness of and interest in Illinois children through the media, publications, and the Internet;
- operating an informational database and listing book of waiting children and families who want to adopt them;
- providing matching and follow-up services to link the children and families.

professionals in the pages of our publications *Adopt Me* and *AICI News*. We distributed more than 96,000 copies of *Adopt Me* to families considering adoption.

**“Yay for AICI! Being listed with them allowed us to find our forever family.” - Teenagers R.J., Bea, Julia, and Grace Thomas, former waiting children who were adopted with the help of AICI.**

Our web site was also a valuable means of creating adoption awareness, generating 1,873 inquiries in FY04. Our upgraded, more user-friendly web site was unveiled early in the fiscal year.

## Listing Databases and Listing Book

In FY04, we used our ALS database to capture information about the children and families registered to use our services. Each month, we used this data to create a listing book with the children's descriptions and photos. We mailed this book to caseworkers and licensed, registered families as a way of introducing the children to them. We received 1,504 inquiries about the children as a result.

## Matching and Follow-Up Services

The ALS did more than just inform families and workers about our listed children in FY04. We used our database and a special computer program to suggest 1,291 matches between the registered children and families. When we received an inquiry about a match or from the ALS Book, we followed up at least three times to ensure the inquiry was thoroughly considered and appropriate action was taken.

## Summary

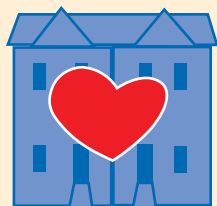
The Adoption Listing Services were very effective again in FY04. In all, we received 2,787 inquiries from licensed families or workers about children they had seen in the ALS book, in the media, or on the Internet. And we made more than 8,300 follow-up calls to these families and workers to be sure that possible placement opportunities were not lost.



## Adoption Awareness

In FY04, we helped create adoption awareness by partnering with media friends such as WGN-TV and the *Chicago Sun-Times*. These media supporters, and many others across the state, regularly featured our listed children in an effort to find them homes and increase public knowledge about adoption. We partnered with NBC5, DCFS, and the Freddie Mac Foundation to follow-up, track, and report on NBC5's "Wednesday's Child" adoption segment.

We provided further education to families and adop-



# Information, Referral, & Follow-Up Services

Many families are interested in adopting and fostering, but they have questions about how to get started. Other families have already adopted, but they're wondering how to access support services. These questions need answers if adoptions are to succeed in Illinois. They are the reason for the existence of the AICI's Information and Referral Services.



In FY04, our Information and Referral Services provided a single point of contact for the public's inquiries about adoption, foster care, and post adoption and guardianship. Our staff was available six days a week, twelve hours a day on weekdays, and eight hours on Saturdays.

## Adoption

Last year, we received 3,626 inquiries about adoption and adoption-related subjects. Most inquirers wanted to learn about how to adopt waiting children. Other inquirers had questions about adopting non-waiting children, children from other countries, relatives, and stepchildren. We also handled inquiries about pregnancy counseling, guardianship, and other topics.

**"AICI has truly been a blessing to my family. Because of the caring and concern of the AICI staff, the life of a child and a family has been changed forever. Thank you, AICI, for the wonderful work you do!" - Ms. Robin Roby, who adopted a waiting child with the help of AICI.**

We referred 601 families to adoption agencies so they could begin the licensing process. We made more than 4,200 follow-up calls to these families to ensure their adoption licensing process was moving forward. If the process was delayed, we intervened.

## Foster Care

We had 2,455 families contact us about foster care, and sixty-two percent were ready to begin the foster care licensing process. After we referred a family for foster care licensing, we maintained contact until the family received its license. In FY04, we made more than 10,600 follow-up calls in this regard.



## Post Adoption and Guardianship

In FY04, our Post Adoption and Guardianship Information and Referral services helped adoptive families stay together. We accomplished this by responding to 375 inquiries with information and/or referrals to appropriate supportive services in local communities. Inquirers needed help with a variety of concerns, including birth family information, adoption subsidies, and accessing medical and mental health resources.

## Summary

In FY04, our Information and Referral Services continued to be a great help to Illinois families. We responded to 6,456 requests for assistance. We tailored our responses to the needs of the individual callers. And we made more than 14,800 follow-up calls to these families to ensure they were well served by us and by the resources with which we connected them.



# Adoptions Unlimited, Inc. Financial Summary for FY04



## Revenue/Support

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Contracts and Grants...	\$1,742,659
Adoption Exchange Association, Inc. / AdoptUSKids contract*...	\$81,071
Donations...	\$5,379
Interest Income...	\$6,651
<b>Total Revenue/Support...</b>	<b>\$1,835,760</b>

## Expenses

Program Services	
Adoption Exchange Association, Inc. / AdoptUSKids contract...	\$13,377
800 Inquiry Line...	\$322,013
Adoption Listing Services...	\$1,174,196
Management and General...	\$262,301
<b>Total Expenses...</b>	<b>\$1,771,887</b>
Excess Revenue/Support over Expenses...	\$63,873

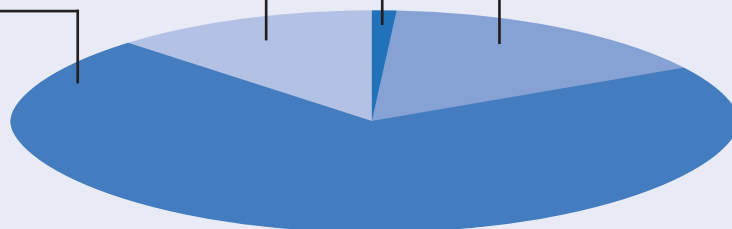
\* Contract applies to time period 5/1/04 through 4/30/05.



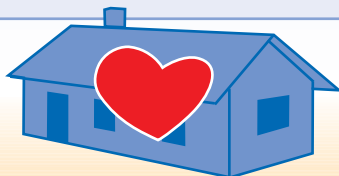
Complete financial statements with the auditor's report for fiscal year ended June 30, 2004 are available upon request by writing Adoptions Unlimited, Inc.

## Financial Summary of Expenses

800 Inquiry Line  
AEA/AdoptUSKids Contract  
Management & General  
Adoption Listing Services\*\*



\*\* ALS budget supported the infrastructure of the 800 Inquiry Line.



# Adoptions Unlimited, Inc. Contributions for FY04

## \$1,000+

Bloomingtondale's  
Jeffery B. Yost

## \$500 +

Merri Dee  
Marilyn R. Panichi

## \$200 +

Rosario and Kathleen Diprizio  
Jerome and Laura Piaskowy  
Price Consulting, Inc.  
Reverend and Mrs. Jon L. Yost

## \$100 +

Alice Auer  
Edgar Retzlaff  
Barbara Weiner

## Up To \$100

Frances Pace Barnes  
Gerhard and Judith Becker  
Mary Bonner  
Vincent and Debra Bridgeforth  
Theodore H. Devlin  
Evelyn Gilcrest  
Therese M. Gottfreid  
Yolanda Harris  
Mahyar and Mojgan Izadi  
Martin Financial Management  
Alvin and Jacqueline Maslov  
LeVon McAllister  
John North  
Joyce Norwood  
John and Sandra O'Donnell  
James Petrone  
Maria Santos

Julia Saulsberry  
Sara Mlsna Yount  
Joanne Zolomij  
Anonymous

"AICI was very helpful to me. When I had a problem with the 'red tape' involved in the adoption process, my family listing worker took control and got everything back on track." - Ms. Patsy Ellis, who is adopting two waiting children with the help of AICI.

## Adoptions Unlimited, Inc. Board of Directors

### Merri Dee Chairman

Director, Community Relations, WGN-TV

### John M. O'Donnell, Ph.D. Vice-Chairman

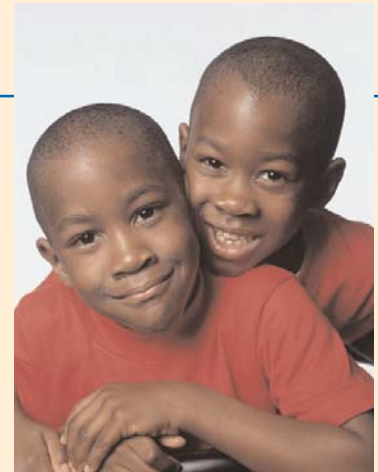
Professor (Retired), University of Illinois; Child Welfare Consultant

### Ramon M. Villanueva, M.D. Secretary

Northwest Community Hospital

### John S. Kendall, Esq. Treasurer

Registered Patent Attorney,  
Davis & Kendall, P.C.



## Adoptions Unlimited, Inc. Staff

Marilyn Panichi, *Executive Director*  
DeAudrey Davis, *Director of Program Services*

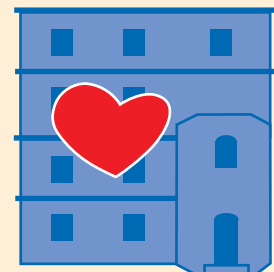
Margaret Burke, *Special Projects Manager*  
LeVon McAllister, *Manager of Information Services*  
Greta Tafat, *Office/Financial Manager*  
Marcia Whiten, *Family Resource Manager*

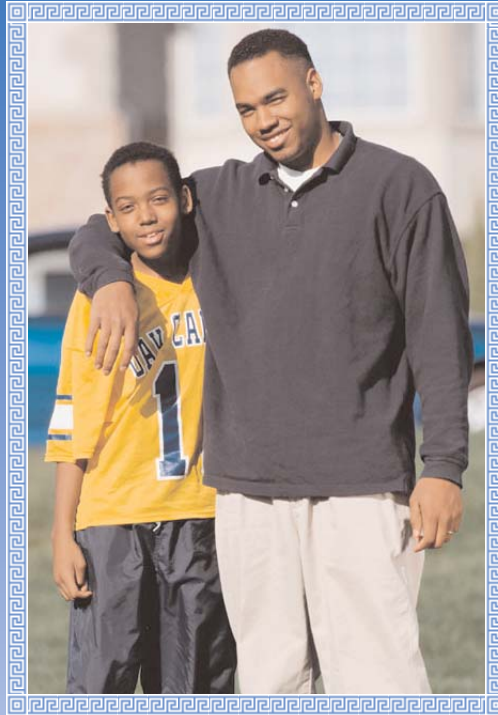
Therese Gottfreid, *Continuous Quality Improvement and Human Resources Coordinator*  
Mark Lichodziejewski, *Communications Coordinator*

Aminah Armour, *Adoption Listing Support Specialist*

Sandra Casillas, *Adoption Listing Specialist*  
Karla Goines, *Reception Support Assistant*  
Philip Haley, *Information Services Technical Specialist*

Linda Jones-West, *Adoption Listing Specialist*  
Olga Landingham, *Recruitment Response Worker*  
Stephanie Robinson, *Family Resource Worker*  
Nydia Sanchez, *Family Resource Worker*  
Adrienne Taylor, *Adoption Listing Specialist*





## **Adoptions Unlimited, Inc.**

Administrator of  
the Adoption Information Center of Illinois

Se Habla Español

Adoption Information:  
800-572-2390

Foster Care Information:  
800-624-KIDS

TDD: 800-401-7740

### **Business Hours**

Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri:  
8:30 AM to 5:00 PM  
Wed: 8:30 AM to 7:00 PM

## **Adoptions Unlimited, Inc.**

120 W. Madison, Suite 800

Chicago, IL 60602

Phone: 312-346-1516

Fax: 312-346-0004

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Web: [www.adoptinfo-il.org](http://www.adoptinfo-il.org)