


Adoptions Unlimited, Inc.

Annual Report 2003



*Building Bridges to
a Brighter Future
for Illinois Children*

Message from the Chairperson and the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

We're happy to report that we succeeded at "building bridges to a brighter future" for waiting children in fiscal year 2003.

If you're not already familiar with us, you might ask, "Who are waiting children?" They are children in foster care who are waiting for loving, adoptive homes. They come from African-American, Hispanic/Latino, and Caucasian backgrounds and are primarily of school age. They are often brothers and sisters who want to be adopted together into the same family. And they may have special medical, emotional, or educational needs.

In FY03, we built bridges between waiting children and adoptive families. During the year, 280 children registered with us crossed over the bridge to permanent placements and brighter futures, thanks to adoption, guardianship, or reunification with their birth families. And 194 of these children were ten or older – a population



AUI Board Chairperson Merri Dee (left) and Executive Director Marilyn Panichi (right).

for whom it is often difficult to find permanent homes.

In FY03, we also built bridges between the public and the adoption community by raising awareness about adoption through the media, our publications, and the Internet. We built bridges that connected hundreds of adoptive families with the services they needed after adoption. And through our diligent follow-up with agencies, we even built bridges that helped child welfare professionals do their jobs better.

These successes were achieved with help from many of you, from our staff, and from our partners at public and private agencies. We appreciate all of your contributions and thank you for your help.

We hope we can count on your continued support so that many more waiting children can reach the brighter futures they so richly deserve.

Sincerely,

Merri Dee

Marilyn Panichi

Adoptions Unlimited, Inc.

In FY03, the Adoptions Unlimited board and staff developed a strategic plan to solidify the organization's position as the premier provider of adoption-related information to the people of Illinois. We created a new mission statement and developed a long-range plan to achieve our goals.

Our Mission

The Adoptions Unlimited, Inc. (AUI) mission is to *secure and support* adoptive families for children in need of a permanent home. Motivated by the belief that every child deserves a loving family, AUI, with professional expertise and technical resources, is a leader in:

- recruiting families for adoption and foster care;
- linking interested families with 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 at large.

Our Vision and Philosophy

Our vision is that Adoptions Unlimited, Inc. should be the preeminent leader, innovator, advocate, and resource regarding adoption and guardianship services for children and families. Our philosophy is to assist in the creation and support of strong adoptive and guardianship families that raise caring and productive members of society.

We carry out our mission through the operation of the Adoption Information Center of Illinois (AICI) and its two major programs, the Adoption Listing Service and the Information and Referral Services.

Adoption Listing Service



Twenty-five percent of families who contacted us as a result of the media were ready to be referred to an agency for licensing.

Visitors to our web site resulted in 2,940 inquiries about the waiting children.

In FY03, the Adoption Listing Service (ALS) served children by:

1. Building awareness of and interest in Illinois children through the media, publications, and the Internet;
2. Operating a database and listing book of waiting children and families who would like to adopt them;
3. Providing matching and follow-up services to link the children and the families.

Building Adoption Awareness

Last year, the AICI created adoption awareness and encouraged interest in adopting waiting children in a variety of ways.

Media - The media featured our listed children regularly on television and in newspapers across the state. Some of our greatest supporters in FY03 were our longtime friends at WGN-TV, the *Chicago Sun Times*, and NBC 5. These organizations have a huge impact on the public. WGN-TV reaches 59 million viewers across the country. NBC 5 has an audience throughout metro Chicago and portions of nearby states. The *Sun-Times* reaches nearly 500,000 readers each weekday.

Publications - Our publications featured waiting children and contained articles designed to educate families and professionals about adoption. We distributed more than 165,000 copies of our largest-circulation publication, *Adopt Me*, to families interested in adoption. In FY03, we expanded *Adopt Me* and made it more colorful, resulting in a 50% increase in inquiries from its readers.

The Internet - Our web site was a valuable resource for the ever-growing number of families with access to the Internet. At the end of FY03, we completed a site upgrade that is due to come online in early FY04. It will make our site even more user-friendly and helpful for families interested in adoption.

Listing Databases and Listing Book

Through our listing services, waiting children were introduced to families who wanted to give them loving homes. The primary means of making these introductions was via the ALS listing book, which includes short profiles and photos of many of the waiting children. Each month, we distributed more than 900 copies of this book to licensed AICI registered families and caseworkers. Last year, we enhanced our information gathering procedures to ensure that our data about children and families remained current and accurate.

In the past year, 280 children listed with the ALS achieved permanency through adoption, guardianship, or reunification with their birth families.

Matching and Follow-Up Services

In FY03, we used our computer matching services, in addition to our listing book, to help connect waiting children with families. Each week, we ran a computer program that suggested matches between families and children registered in our database. During the year, we suggested 1,695 of these matches. Each time we received an inquiry based on listing book or computer matches, we followed up at least three times to ensure the match was thoroughly considered and appropriate action was taken.

Our Adoption Listing Service served 1,544 children and families in FY03.

Adoption Listing Service Summary

In FY03, the Adoption Listing Service continued to be successful at building bridges between Illinois waiting children and potential adoptive families. We received 3,618 inquiries from licensed families or workers about specific children they had seen in the ALS book, in the media, or on the Internet. And we made more than 10,800 follow-up calls to families and workers to be sure that possible placement opportunities were not lost.



Information, Referral, and Follow-Up Services



In FY03, the AICI Information and Referral Services provided a single point of contact for the public's inquiries about adoption, foster care, and post adoption and guardianship. We constantly updated our information to ensure it was accurate. Our staff was available to respond to inquiries six days a week, twelve hours a day on weekdays and eight hours on Saturdays.

Adoption

Last year, we received 4,396 inquiries about adoption and adoption-related subjects. Most of these callers contacted us to take the first step in learning more about waiting children. For other callers, we provided answers to questions about adopting non-waiting children, children from other countries, relatives, and stepchildren. Additionally, we handled calls concerning pregnancy counseling, guardianship, and other topics. All callers had their questions answered, were sent relevant information, and/or were referred to appropriate resources.

We referred 769 families to adoption agencies so they could begin the adoption licensing process. Each time we referred one of these families, we followed up to be sure that contact between the family and agency had been established and that the licensing process was moving forward. We stayed in touch with each family until a child was placed for adoption or the family discontinued its adoption plan. Last year we made more than 5,300 follow-up calls to these families.

We made more than 5,300 follow-up calls to families to ensure their adoption licensing process was moving forward. If the process was delayed, we intervened.



Foster Care

We helped a great many families who had questions about foster care. Of the 2,989 callers who requested foster care information, 2,067 were ready to become foster parents, and we referred them to child welfare agencies for licensing. Callers with general foster care questions had their questions answered, were sent relevant information, and/or were referred to appropriate resources. After we referred a family for foster care licensing, we maintained contact until the family was licensed. Last year we made more than 14,000 follow-up calls to these families.

Sixty-nine percent of foster care callers were ready to begin the licensing process, and we referred them to agencies.

Post Adoption and Guardianship

In FY03, our Post Adoption and Guardianship Information and Referral Services helped adoptive families stay together. We accomplished this by providing 445 callers with information and/or referrals to appropriate supportive services in their local communities. Inquirers needed help with a variety of concerns, including birth family information, adoption subsidies, and accessing medical and mental health resources. Whenever possible, we also followed up with callers to ensure they were connected with a service provider who could serve them.

Our Information and Referral Services responded to 7,830 requests for assistance.

Information, Referral, and Follow-Up Services Summary

In FY03, our Information and Referral Services helped build bridges between families and the resources they needed. We responded to 7,830 requests for assistance. We understood that each person who contacted us had unique needs, so we tailored our recommendations to fit the individual. Additionally, we made more than 19,000 follow-up calls to these families to ensure that they were well served by us and by the resources with which we connected them.



FY03 Summary



Our work was praised by respondents to our customer surveys. Ninety-seven percent rated our service as “excellent” or “good.” Ninety-nine percent said they would recommend the AICI to others as a helpful resource for adoption and foster care information.

- We served 12,992 children, families, and individuals in our Adoption Listing Service and Information and Referral Service programs.
- We responded to 11,448 requests for service. Our Adoption Listing Service team handled 3,618 inquiries from licensed families or caseworkers about specific children they had seen in the ALS book, in the media, or on the Internet. Our Information and Referral Services team handled 7,830 inquiries from families or caseworkers about adoption, foster care or post adoption/guardianship services.
- We referred 2,836 families to agencies to be licensed for adoption or foster care.
- We suggested 1,695 matches between children and families registered in our database.
- We made more than 29,800 calls to families and workers to follow up on listing inquiries and licensing referrals.
- We produced and distributed more than 165,000 copies of *Adopt Me*, our bimonthly newsletter for families interested in adoption.
- We distributed more than 10,000 copies of our Adoption Listing Service book.
- 280 of our listed children achieved permanency through adoption, guardianship, or reunification with birth parents.

Adoptions Unlimited, Inc. - Financial Summary for FY03

Revenue/Support

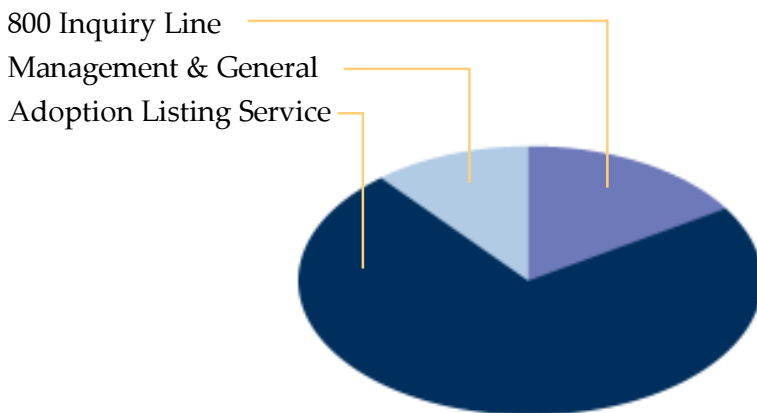
Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Contracts and Grants...	\$ 1, 7 8 8, 3 4 7
Donations...	\$ 1 4, 0 9 6
Interest Income...	\$ 5, 3 3 1
Net Assets Released from Restrictions...	\$ 5 9 5
<hr/>	
Total Revenue/Support...	\$ 1, 8 0 8, 3 6 9

Expenses

Program Services	
800 Inquiry Line...	\$ 3 2 2, 0 1 3
Adoption Listing Services...	\$ 1, 2 8 9, 0 3 1
Management and General...	\$ 2 0 5, 2 8 3
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Total Expenses...	\$ 1, 8 1 6, 3 2 7
Excess Expenses over Revenue/Support ...	\$ 7, 9 5 8



Financial Summary of Expenses



Complete financial statements with the auditor's report for fiscal year ended June 30, 2003 are available upon request by writing Adoptions Unlimited, Inc.

Adoptions Unlimited, Inc. - Contributions for FY03

\$1,000 +

Adoption Exchange Association
Bloomingdale's
Federated Department Stores Foundation

John M. O'Donnell
Jeffery B. Yost

\$500 +

Merri Dee
Marilyn R. Panichi

Craig Veselik
Reverend and Mrs. Jon L. Yost

\$100 +

American Express Tax and Business Services
Anonymous
Reverend and Mrs. Donald M. Hallberg
Theresa Mayberry Dunn

Jerome Piaskowy, Jr.
Thornton & Powell, Inc.
Ramon M. Villanueva
Barbara A. Weiner

Up to \$100

Girtha Allen
Alice Auer
Frances Pace Barnes
Randy and Elizabeth Bedford
In Memory of Dorothy Bedford
Vincent and Debra Bridgeforth
Richard and Barbara Cochran
Ted Devlin
Tyrone and Paula Ellis
William and Lynda Frillman
Marie Gavin
Therese M. Gottfreid
Philip Haley
Cecilia James
Linda Jones-West
Vincent R. Kaminski, Esq.
Susan Kipley and Susan McNichols
Manolis Kostantinidis

Robert Levy
Mark Lichodziejewski
Christa Lopez
Therese Martin
Alvin and Jacqueline Maslov
LeVon McAllister
Alfred G. Nichols
Randy Nixon
Rick Nixon
Dorothy Rachwal
Gitelle Rapoport
Greta Tafat
Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Vijungco
Allan Weiss
Marcia Whiten
Sara Mlsna Yount
Joanne Zolomij

In-Kind Contributors

Robert Levy

Adoptions Unlimited, Inc. - Board of Directors

Merri Dee
Chair
Director, Community Relations, WGN-TV

John M. O'Donnell, Ph.D.
Vice-Chair
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.

Theresa Mayberry Dunn, Ph.D.
CEO, Grace Hill Settlement House

Craig Veselik
Midwest Capital Financial Group

Diane Yost
Executive Director, Albany Park Community Center

Adoptions Unlimited, Inc. Staff

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Executive Director

Gretchen Hilliard-Boyd
Adoption Listing Manager

LeVon McAllister
Manager, Information Services

DeAudrey Davis
Director of Program Services

Marcia Whiten
Family Resource Manager

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Chinelo Nwanya
Irene Prewitt
Gitelle Rapoport
Stephanie Robinson
Nydia Sanchez
Diana Stevenson
Adrienne Taylor
Kara Whelan
Monica Williams



Adoptions Unlimited, Inc.

Administrator of the Adoption Information Center of Illinois

Adoption Information: 800-572-2390
Foster Care Information: 800-624-KIDS
TDD: 800-401-7740
Se Habla Español

Hours:

M-F 8 AM - 8 PM
Sat 9 AM - 5 PM

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