

HeartStrings

Spring 2011



Guiding your heart every step of your journey



Why families choose A Step Ahead Adoption Services

By Diane Hogan, Owner/President

Almost daily, as I'm taking prospective calls and online inquiries, I am always asked, "Why do families choose to work with A Step Ahead (ASA) when they can sign with an agency or an attorney?" ... "Do you just get the 'leftover' cases?" ... "Why do agencies and attorneys want to work with A Step Ahead?"

Those are just a few of the important and necessary questions I answer. If you are reading this article, you are either a prospective family, current family or alumni family (someone who has used ASA before and are coming back for another adoption with our services). Since these questions recur, what a good place and time to provide a response to a broader audience!

Q: Why do families choose to work with A Step Ahead when they can sign with an agency or an attorney?

A: More now than in the past, the options for adoption are many and varied. Working with the knowledgeable consultants who work for ASA gives you the necessary "guide-on-the-side" who provides personal education, support and guidance. The traditional approach to domestic (US) adoption is to choose an agency or an attorney, sign on with them and wait for your adoption to come through their doors. While this is the "usual" way folks approach adoption, with the advent of technology in the adoption business, there are a myriad of options. A life-experienced adoption consultant can make the journey so much easier! By educating our client families, not only on the process and the business of adoption, but also on parenting preparation, our client families can go into the adoption arena prepared and ready for the twist-n-turns that come with navigating a successful adoption placement. Additionally, since ASA has been working with a variety of small agencies and attorneys for over 11 years, we now have a good reputation with adoption providers. Our client families have the ability to see possible cases from throughout the US and have more choice in the best adoption plan to fit their family's priorities.

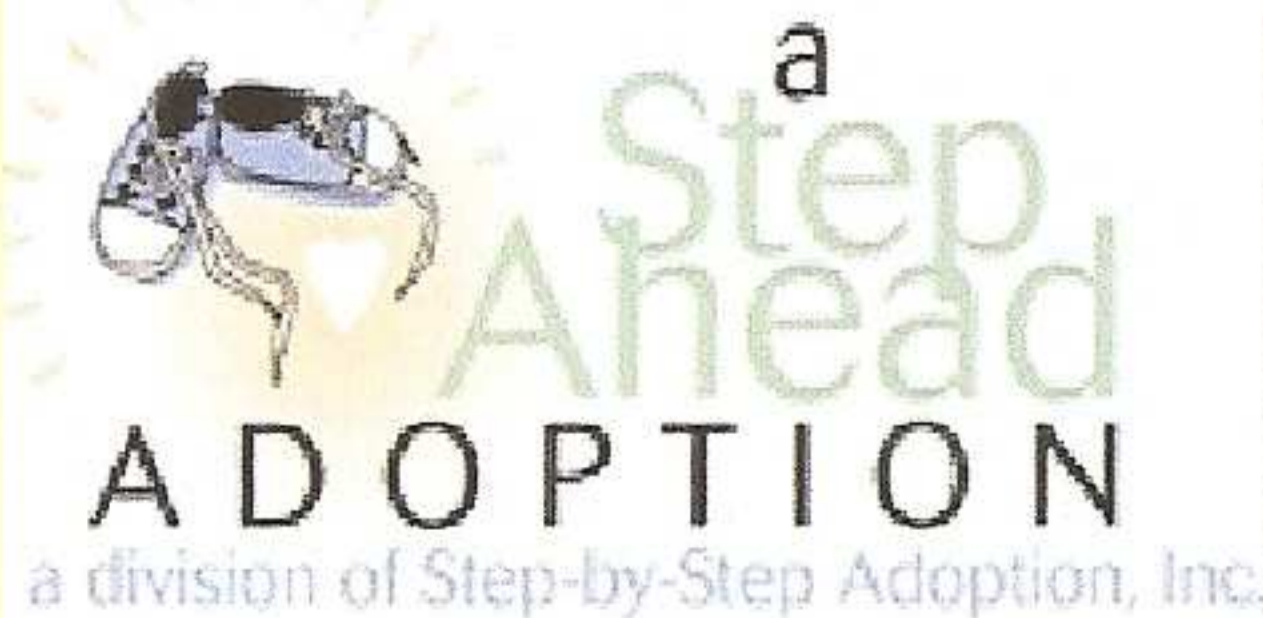
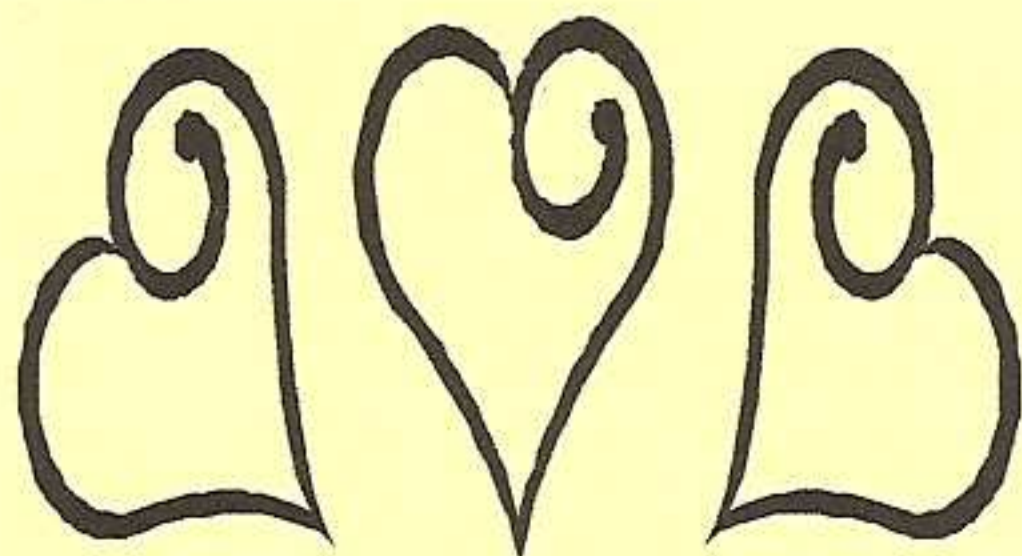
Q: Do you (ASA) just get the "leftover" case?

A: This is one of my favorite questions! Just ask the 61 families with whom we helped in 2010 if they feel their child is "leftover." More than likely you will hear ... *We could not have created such a fantastic child ...our baby is perfect for our family ...this is the most precious child I have ever enjoyed parenting!* So, I can tell you just from the experience of our successful adoptive families that ever placement is a joy. We think the ASA babies & children could go home with blue ribbons as being the top prize of their family. But to get to the heart of this question Often adoption providers do keep a roster of waiting families. Why would they phone us? Perhaps their waiting families are "too picky" or they do not have a diverse pool of families or the birthparent is seeking something specific in an adoptive family. So whether we are contacted first, second or last ... we always scrutinize the cases that are presented to us and screen out if we feel the case is too risky for any of our client families.

Q: Why do agencies and attorneys choose to work with ASA?

A: We are often the FIRST CHOICE of adoption providers because they know our families are ready, educated, and prepared. Many agencies and attorneys realize when they phone ASA, we are with the adoptive family not only from the presentation of a prospective case, but stay with the team of providers through match, placement and finalization. You won't find that breadth of service from many of the other consulting services in the adoption business.

Additionally, all of our consultants are members of the adoption triad .. we are adoptive parents, adoptees or birth parents .. we have walked a mile in your shoes and have a vested interest in making sure our client families have a positive experience on their own adoption journey. Many adoption agencies and law firms appreciate that we are not only personally invested in the client's adoption journey, but have professional readiness as well. All ASA consultants are kept current with educational retreats, conference calls as a group, and continuing education opportunities.



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Visit us on the web: www.AStepAheadAdoption.com

Carolina On My Mind . . .

Here I sit in Colorado dreaming of spring time in the Carolinas. What a better way to celebrate than with an old-fashioned Southern picnic complete with sweet tea, lemonade and fried chicken! Put on your party pants and plan to join the ASA gals for a down-home picnic on Saturday, April 2, 2011.

What: ASA Family Celebration Picnic

Where: Latta Park Shelter

(Dilworth neighborhood)

700 Romany Road

Charlotte, NC 28203

When: Saturday, April 2, 2011 ~ 4-6 p.m.

Who: ALL ASA CURRENT, ALUMNI, PROSPECTIVE, & CLIENT FAMILIES!

Bring the kids, bring your friends

Why: It is time to celebrate the joy of adoption!

We kindly request all attending families bring a dessert or side dish to share.

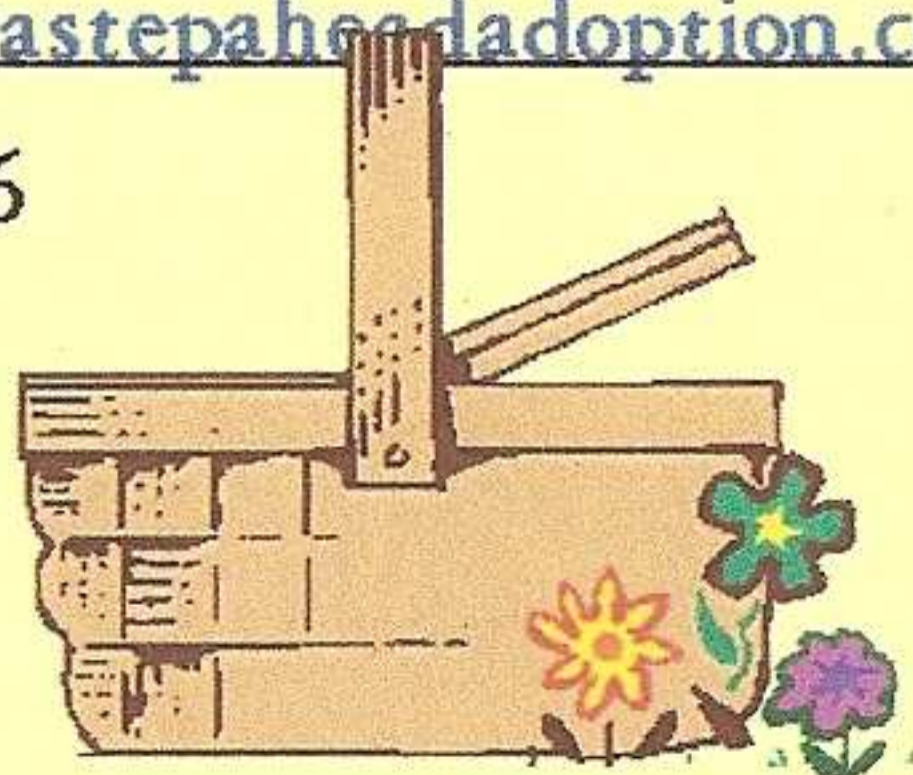
If you prefer, you are welcome to bring your own picnic.

ASA is providing the main dish and the beverages.

RSVP:

dianehogan@astepaheadadoption.com or

877-532-0236



Adopting is a big step.....

Let us keep you A Step Ahead



Are All Those Kids Yours?

By Charlie Marquardt, Domestic Consultant

"Are all those kids yours or do you run a day care?"

I have been asked that question more than once and the answer is, "yes, they're all mine and no, I don't run a daycare."

I am a mom to four kids; biological twins, a son born in Guatemala and a daughter who is Mexican by descent and American by birth. Two of my children look just like me and two don't look like me at all. It's how I longed for my family to look and it still surprises me that someone wouldn't understand that.

I love the Latin culture and I long for all of my children to love it as well. In order to help them understand just how much we hope they will embrace the Hispanic culture of our family, our children attend a Spanish immersion school. Sending them off to learn in a language that I can't speak was daunting, but it was absolutely the right thing to do. The school is filled with Caucasian, African American and Latino children. On some level, the school matches our family; not the same but with the same goal in mind - growing, learning and loving people from all backgrounds.

My children also struggle to understand why people would ask if they all go together. They have been asked if they have the same father (shocking, I know, but people ask some really inappropriate questions sometimes!) or if they are helping take care of someone else's child.

How do you handle this kind of thing? We have found the best answer is the truth.

"Why yes, we do all have the same dad." Or "We are a family." My husband and I taught the children at an early age that you don't have to look alike to be a family. You don't have to share the same culture. You don't have to be related by blood. We go together because God brought us together through adoption. And we wouldn't have it any other way.



Get to know some of our staff

~ Diane Hogan ~

President and Owner of A Step Ahead Adoptions, Inc, holds B.S. and M.A. degrees in education. Along with her 20 years in education, Diane has been actively involved in the adoption community since 1992. Diane has been able to develop relationships with adoption professionals across the country. In addition, Diane is a freelance writer/editor and works contractually for textbook publishers. Diane and her family live in Colorado Springs, CO. Through the miracle of adoption, Diane and her husband, Pat, have a daughter and a son.

~ Charmaine (Charlie) Marquardt ~

Domestic adoption consultant, lives in Charlotte, North Carolina. Charlie holds B.A. and M.Ed degrees in education. Her previous work experiences were as a classroom teacher and a school principal. Now, she is a stay-at-home mom to her four children and also works as an adoption consultant. She and her husband, Bill are the proud parents of biological twins (boy & girl), a son adopted from Guatemala, and a daughter adopted domestically. Charlie & Bill used ASA's services for the adoption of their daughter, Anna Bryan.

In 2010, ASA is very proud to have had the opportunity to be apart of 65 children finding their forever families. That includes two sets of twins and two sibling groups.

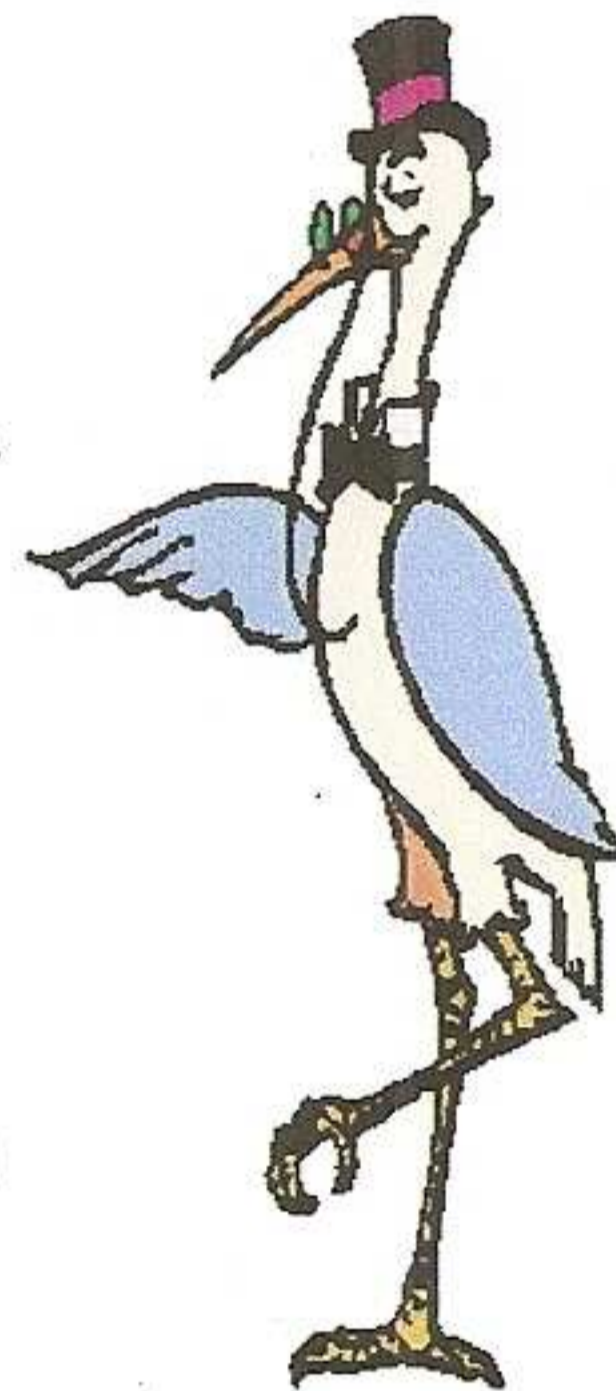
We are off to a great 2011, there are many families matched and awaiting their big day.

Waiting Expectantly

Brevard & Lori, NC.....Matched!.....baby in AZ
 John & Sandy, KY.....Matched!.....baby in OK
 Phillip & Leslie, NC.....Matched!.....baby in AL
 Greg & Cheri, NC.....Matched!.....baby in KS
 Jamie & Jody, WI.....Matched!.....baby in TN
 Sarah & Stef, TN.....Matched!.....baby in AZ
 Stephen & Rachel, MA.....Matched!.....baby in AZ
 Walter & Amy, KS.....Matched!.....baby in KS
 Dennis & Alicia, NC.....Matched!.....baby in FL
 Nick & Kate, NC.....Matched!.....baby in FL
 Derek & Becky, NC.....Matched!.....baby in OK

"HAPPY HOMECOMING TO OUR 2010 FAMILIES"

Jason & Jennifer, NC	1/2010	Kate
Kyle & Catherine, NC	1/2010	James
Brett & Shannon, NC	1/2010	Andrew
Jason & Heather, NC	2/2010	Abigail
Robert & Marcy, NC	2/2010	Noah
Mark & Christina, OH	2/2010	Mya
Linda, NC	2/2010	Aubrey Anne
David & Martha, NY	3/2010	Olivia
Mike & Helen, NC	3/2010	Sean
Mike & Pam, NC	4/2010	William
Mike & Marimarta, NC	4/2010	Rachel
Tom & Eileen, PA	4/2010	April
Steve & Lisa, FL	5/2010	Will
Tim & Cindy, SC	5/2010	Tyler Edward
Jose & Donnette, CO	5/2010	Tiana
Mark & Debbie, KS	5/2010	Macy
Tim & Kelly, SC	5/2010	Jackson Gabriel
Chris & Tracy, SC	5/2010	Riley Christopher
Doug & Sandy, MO	5/2010	Rook Augustus
Chuck & Kelli, MO	5/2010	Maverick Alan
Matt & Megan, KS	5/2010	Braeden
Mike & Sheila, MA	6/2010	Nina
Anthony & Sharon, SC	6/2010	Cambria
Nick & Michelle, SC	6/2010	Hannah & Walter
Brad & Ashleigh, NC	6/2010	Bronte Cathleen
John & Anne, NC	6/2010	Catherine Grace
Rob & Sherri, NC	6/2010	Angelena Sophia
Clark & Bobbi, KS	6/2010	Max
Rich & Colleen, NC	7/2010	Phoebe Grace
Brett & Molly, AZ	7/2010	Andrew Edward & Spencer Robert Dave
& Jodi, GA	7/2010	Robert David & Henry Patrick



Dani & Dani, MA	7/2010	Jodi Alexander
Mark & Cama, FL	7/2010	Mason Cambell
Mike & Michelle, NC	7/2010	Braden
Nick & Jimni, FL	7/2010	Chase
John & Anne, NC	7/2010	Catherine Grace
Bill & Kelli, FL	9/2010	Natalie
Greg & April, NC	9/2010	Jamieson
John & Stacy, VA	9/2010	Kate
Patti, FL	9/2010	Jackson Lawrence
John & Joanne, FL	9/2010	Logan & Laura
David & Dee, NC	10/2010	Brody
John & Susan, NC	10/2010	Ava Christina
Todd & Debbie, WI	10/2010	Aiden Robert
BJ & Jamie, NC	10/2010	Cooper Nicholas
Tappan & Amy, NM	10/2010	Lauren
Jimmy & Val, NC	10/2010	Genevieve
Doug & Jennifer, NC	11/2010	Gabriella
Mack & Kelly, TX	11/2010	Sofia Ann
Donald & Allison, CO	11/2010	Gavin
Erik & Jennifer, MO	11/2010	Leif Carlos
Chris & Amy, NC	11/2010	Joshua
Bob & Jen, MO	11/2010	Ryan William
Darrin & Robyn, FL	12/2010	Raleigh Bishop
Luis & Gina, FL	12/2010	Reynolds Joseph
Sarah & Stef	12/2010	Charlie Camille
Devika, TN	12/2010	Jaya Shivani
John & Monica, MO	12/2010	Avery Joy
Nelson & Meredith, MA	12/2010	Lila Marie Scout
Troy & Robin, NC	12/2010	Ryleigh
Charlie & Allison, NC	12/2010	Paul Hayden