

# The Adoption Link

## ABC

*Adoption By Choice Ltd.*  
*Licensed Open Adoption Agency*



*From Sandy..*

On behalf of the Adoption By Choice team I'd like to wish you and your families a warm welcome to 2020! This year brings new beginnings for me personally, but also for ABC. I have come to learn that nothing in life remains the same. Change is inevitable, change is the only constant that we can count on. As you are all aware, ABC has gone through changes in the last year. Often change can bring uncertainty and/or fear of "what will be." I choose to see change at ABC as an opportunity help to propel innovation, creativity and continuous evolution of best practice adoption work. What emerges from change are new ways of doing innovative and creative work to attract more birth parents, as well as development of fundraising efforts to expand programming while enhancing what currently exists as meaningful work. As I envision the next year, I need all of your help to work together to engage in what could be and what will be. I choose to focus on change as possibility, this is what I'm most excited about in my early days at ABC.

Last year, ABC celebrated it's 30 Anniversary! In 1989, Adoption By Choice was the first licensed open adoption agency in Alberta, this is quite something to be proud of. It's a privilege for me to work alongside all of you in the Adoption sector. Whether it's as a valuable community partner, birth parent, adoptive parent, kinship parent, parents awaiting placement or as fellow colleagues throughout Alberta, together we all work towards our mission of bringing safety, permanency and happiness to children. I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge the legacy of leaders of this agency that have brought it to where it is today. Carol Lamb, founder/former Executive Director, Ramone Kindrat former Executive director, Jerry -Lynn Deveau, former Executive Director and now myself.

Without the guidance and leadership of these strong women the vision of this agency wouldn't be where it is today.



A little about myself as your new leader. I was born and raised in Regina Saskatchewan, moved here as a naïve 20-year-old in 1994 to go to Mount Royal College to study social work. And just like that I've been in Calgary ever since! After I completed my social work diploma, I was anxious to get working in the field and remained growing as a social worker ever since. Since 1996 I've worked as a social worker across diverse sectors but have always found a passion for working with vulnerable children and their families. I've spent the last 16 years leading programs in the early childhood sector, youth mental health sector, family conflict and junior high school youth programming. It was during this time that I had the opportunity to complete my Masters of Leadership from Royal Roads University in Victoria in 2015. I would say that this program changed my life and has given me perspective on what I love in my career, being a leader to foster healthy cohesive cultures while developing evidence based innovative programs and services.



A few stats for 2019, ABC had 20 placements, 3 of which were instant placements in December, lucky me, good time to jump in! We have 65 couples on our waitlist for placements and ongoing contact with new applicants. We have some fresh ideas to ensure we are remaining in connection with our clients and strengthening their level of engagement. I'd also like to see post placement support foster a community of parents that support one another while developing and learning their parenting skills and knowledge of adoption. Our homestudy program remains strong with staff who are skilled and experienced, I would say is what continues to make us unique in this sector. What is most important for us at ABC is answering the call of a birth parent and supporting this very complex process. This is where the story begins of where the beautiful moments happen.

I'm happy that I had the opportunity to meet some of you at our Calgary and Edmonton open house, this is what brings meaning the work and enjoy hearing the unique adoption journey. Please feel free to drop in to our office or call me anytime, I appreciate hearing your thoughts and ideas.

[Sandy.wagner@adoptionbychoice.ca](mailto:Sandy.wagner@adoptionbychoice.ca)

Sandy Wagner, MA, RSW  
Executive Director



## *From Wanda...*

Along with Sandy, I am a new addition to the Adoption by Choice team in the office, starting in my position of overseeing the domestic adoption program. I began my connection with ABC in 2006 as a home study writer for government and domestic adoptions, and continued in this position until 2011. What spoke to me as a writer was the vulnerability in the story leading up to the home study, and also the trust extended to me to capture this story and the lives of the applicants.

A little more about me. I have been a social worker in Calgary for 25 years, working with people experiencing domestic and sexual violence, poverty, parenting and familial struggles, career changes, most recently, in a high school for pregnant and parenting female students. I just recently completed my Masters in Social Work and am excited for the next chapter of my career here at ABC. I am excited at the possibilities in this position and being part of the future direction of the agency.

I would love to hear from you – so please drop me a line or reach out if you have any questions, or just want to say 'Hi'.

[Wanda.randles@adoptionbychoice.ca](mailto:Wanda.randles@adoptionbychoice.ca)

Wanda Randles, BSW, RSW  
Adoption Program Supervisor



# Placements

## 2017

18 Placements  
1 revocation



## 2018

11 placements  
0 Revocations



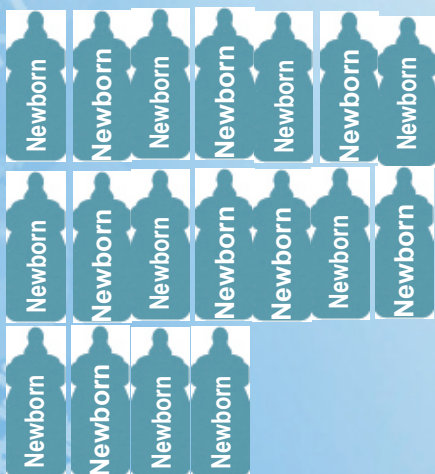
## 2019

20 Placements  
3 Revocations



# Age

18 Newborns



8 newborn infants Newborn  
2 placements of infants 1 month old  
1 placement of an infant 13 months old



19 Newborns  
1 placement of a 5 yr old



# Ethnicity

8 Mixed race placements:  
3 Caucasian/Indigenous  
1 Caucasian/Metis  
1 Indigenous/African  
1 Caucasian/Spanish  
2 Caucasian/African American  
10 Caucasian

4 placements Caucasian  
2 placements mixed race Caucasian/Indigenous  
1 placement mixed race Caucasian/Barbadian  
1 placement Sudanese  
1 placement non-Caucasian:  
1 Caucasian/Indigenous  
1 Sudanese

12 Placements Caucasian  
4 Indigenous/Caucasian  
2 Metis/Caucasian  
2 East Indian



## *From Ramone...*

Hello Everyone,

I am very thankful for Sandy Wagner and Wanda Randles joining our ABC team in Calgary. Wanda, a Masters level social worker and Sandy a Masters in Leadership have amazing skill and dedication to their work every day at ABC. I feel exceptionally confident that they will guide ABC into its next chapter. You will hear about some of the new program ideas and innovations that they are working on over the next weeks and months.

I have been so blessed to be part of the ABC family over the past 18 years, and I am confident that the team will continue the important work that the agency has always done over the past 30 years. I am looking forward to the next chapter of my life which will focus on my family, masters program and private practice.

As we all know, Adoption is a life-long process that begins at placement but evolves over the years as your child and family grow and develop. In my counselling practice I work with several families in their adoption journey when they find difficulties arise. Parenting is likely the toughest, yet most rewarding job that anyone will ever have. Being an adoptive parent adds a number of additional layers with unique challenges. Many families find that support to help get through these difficulties can make all the difference. If you would like to learn more about the work I am focusing on please visit

Ramone Kindrat, BSW, RSW  
Consultant





# New Arrivals

## Bauer / Meakin



We are proud to announce the newest member of our family, Max Jesse Bauer . Max was born on June 26, 2019 and placed with us on June 28, 2019. He weighed in at 5 lbs 12 oz and is 48 cm long. There are no words to express how truly happy we are. We are forever grateful to Max's birth family and our social worker Gurkirat for all of her support through this process. Our adventure has just begun!  
Justin & Erin

## Blundon

We are beyond thrilled to announce that after waiting 886 days we have adopted a beautiful baby girl named "Harper Mary Grace"! Harper was born Thursday July 18th, 2019 at 7:20 am in Medicine Hat, Alberta. This little girl stole our hearts the moment we met her. We are overjoyed, happy and grateful for her birth mom, who picked us to be Harper's forever family.



We want to thank her birth mom for making our family complete and making our dream come true! We now have a whole other family to embrace and we are so excited to make new memories with them. Harper's big sister Peyton is over the moon! She was so excited to head back to school this fall to tell all her classmates that she is a big sister. We also want to thank our social worker Anneke Baker. She has helped us in so many ways over the past 2.5 years and we can't thank her enough for her guidance and support.  
Colin, Kimberly, Peyton and Harper



# Groulik

# New Arrivals



For with God nothing shall be impossible Luke 1:37

We were impatiently awaiting the Christmas break to relax, unwind, lay on the couch and read, but instead got a call that would not only change our lives forever for the better, but involved no such downtime! So, if you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans.

On Saturday, December 21st, our precious baby Mary was born and was waiting for us to come to Edmonton to meet her. The next day, we eagerly drove from Calgary to Edmonton, calling all our family and friends along the way, beaming with joy as we shared the news that we had been chosen to be parents to Mary.

Our family of three spent our first Christmas together – it was an overwhelming feeling of happiness that we shared.

Today, our baby girl is happy, funny, sweet and absolutely delightful. We thank God for the miracle of life, the blessing to be parents, and for the extremely committed and dedicated staff at Adoption By Choice. Without them, we would not be where we are today. Thank you for making this miracle a reality!



# New Arrivals

# Houck



With great joy & gratitude, we would like to introduce you to our daughter, Rachel Catherine Chloe. We received the most incredible phone call at 4:00pm November 6th, telling us we had been chosen! Rachel was lovingly placed in our arms on November 8th, 2019, at just two days old and our lives are forever changed. She spent 2 weeks in the NICU due to her small size and we were finally able to bring our girl home November 20th, 2019 weighing a whopping 4lbs 4oz.

Rachel is now 12 weeks old (7 weeks adjusted) she's smiling, just started giggling and weighs an impressive 11lbs 6oz and is 21 1/4 inches long. She loves kisses, cuddles, being read to and her seal soother.

Being chosen to be Rachels' parents is a privilege that we are still struggling to find words for, our hearts are so full of love and appreciation for her birth mother, she made us a family

We would also like to thank Adoption By Choice, especially our social worker, Hanneke, without all of the amazing staff at ABC our family would not be complete!

Thank you,  
Daniel, Ashley & Rachel



# New Arrivals

## Legeas / Kearley



We're absolutely thrilled to introduce the newest addition to our family.

Isabella Anne Legeas, born May 30th at 7:11pm, 7 lbs 7 oz 17 inches. We are over the moon and in total awe with her. We finally have our missing piece.

We want to take a moment and thank Isabella's birth mom. She is strong, loving and selfless. We have so much respect, love and gratitude for her as well as Isabella's birth Grandma. Thank you for making our family complete & our dreams come true.

We would also like to thank Gurkirat with ABC Adoption for her kindness and compassion. We are so grateful to have had you by our sides through this placement journey. Honestly, we can not say thank you enough.

The wait was long but the love was instant. Welcome to the world beautiful baby Bella. You are so loved and we cannot wait to watch you grow and experience life.

Photo credit - Penner Portrait Photography



# New Arrivals

## Nelson



After four and a half years of waiting, we are thrilled to announce the arrival of Emersyn Rose Nelson, born October 3, 2019. She is truly a blessing to us and our family. We would like to thank her birth mom for choosing us and look forward to continuing to build our relationship in the future. Emersyn is a playful baby who loves to smile and laugh!

-Chuck, Amber and Emersyn Nelson (couldn't choose just one photo!)



# New Arrivals

Orr



We are proud to announce the adoption of our little baby boy, Noah Matthew! He was born in Medicine Hat on June 25 at 4:01pm, and we arrived at the hospital to meet him around midnight that same day. We became primary caregivers for him right away and the nurses had a room for us in the hospital so we could stay the night. We brought him home on June 26 (just 24 hours after leaving to go get him) and have been so incredibly blessed ever since. God sure does work in wonderful ways and we see His goodness through every step of this process! His plan is great and although trusting in it was difficult at times, it absolutely has been PERFECT timing. We love our little man more than we ever could have imagined, and we will be eternally grateful to his birth mother and her family for loving him so much and being brave enough to trust us to be his parents.

"Someday I'll hold you in my arms and I'll understand why I waited for you."

Zalasky



Chris and Anita Zalasky are thrilled to introduce Alexander Christopher Zalasky born September 20. He is everything we had been waiting for and we are so grateful to his birth parents for placing him with us.



# New Arrivals

## Reid



What an amazing adventure our family has been on. November 25th at 11am our son Sawyer was placed in our arms and our hearts burst with love. He was a tiny little guy being only born on November 22nd but he was a little champ right from day one. We are forever grateful to Sawyer's birth parents for the most precious gift of our son. We cannot wait to see what adventures are ahead of us. With love, The Reid's (Chris, Rachel and Sawyer)



# Thank You!

*We couldn't create this newsletter without your help as a community of adoptive families, please feel free to contact us at any time with updates/pics/news you would like to share.*

Thanks to all who graciously volunteered to share their adoption experiences at our workshops.

Adoption By Choice sends this newsletter via email to adoptive families, waiting families and interested parties in Alberta and across Canada. If you would like to be on our e-mail list, please give Katrina a call at the office, (403) 245-8854, or email [calgary@adoptionbychoice.ca](mailto:calgary@adoptionbychoice.ca). Previous additions of the newsletter are also available on the website at [www.adoptionbychoice.ca](http://www.adoptionbychoice.ca). If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please let us know and we will remove you from the distribution list.