Our Own Nurse Jenny
A 1950s nurse returns to The Cradle, pg. 4

The Year in Review
Highlights from FY2017, pg. 6

In Their Own Words
Thoughts from members of the adoption triad, pg. 9
March

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE CRADLE!
Monday, March 12

95!

Please turn to the back page for more information about this Cradle milestone.

PARENTING WORKSHOP
Cracking the Code on Misbehavior
Saturday, March 24, 9:30am – 11:30am
The Cradle, Evanston

Understand why negative behaviors occur and learn tools, techniques and activities parents can use to tame temper tantrums, provide alternative discipline, and create positive relationships. Mandy Jones, LCSW, JD, post-adoption and Certified Theraplay® Therapist, will lead this workshop.

April

PARENTING WORKSHOP
Sensory Processing, Self-Regulation... and You
Saturday, April 21, 9:30am – 11:30am
The Cradle, Evanston

Led by clinical pediatric psychologist Dr. Dan Griffith, this workshop will help parents identify common sensory/regulatory difficulties that children experience, work through the stresses these difficulties may cause, and learn intervention strategies.

May

NURSES APPRECIATION LUNCH
Friday, May 11 at The Cradle

May 6-12 is National Nurses Week, and here at The Cradle, we love our nurses and infant aides! To show our appreciation, we host a luncheon every May for our devoted Nursery staff.

BIRTH MOTHER’S DAY BRUNCH
Saturday, May 12 at The Cradle

Each year, The Cradle hosts a luncheon to honor the women who make the difficult and loving decision to give their children the life they dream for them. Planning is underway for this event. If you are interested in making a donation (for food, flowers, cake, etc.) or volunteering (driving birth moms, providing childcare), please contact Sarah at 847.733.3204 or sodonnell@cradle.org.

CRADLE OPEN HOUSE
Saturday, June 9
12pm – 3pm
The Cradle, Evanston

THE CRADLE CLASSIC
Monday, July 9, 10am – 7pm
Glen View Club, Golf, IL

Save The Date!
Dear Cradle Friends,

Happy New Year!

I celebrated my one-year anniversary at The Cradle on December 1st and what an amazing year it has been! Since I last wrote to you, my son Alex and I had a fantastic time being part of The Cradle Family Picnic in July; our Rock The Cradle Gala in October was one of the most memorable events ever (turn to page 8 for a recap); and I’ve had the opportunity to meet many more of the wonderful families, friends, donors and volunteers who make The Cradle such a unique organization.

This issue will give you a peek into our history while also delving into different aspects of the innovative work taking place at The Cradle today.

In September, I was delighted to welcome back 1950s Cradle nurse and instructor, Jenny Cordisco, for a visit and tour. You can read Jenny’s reminiscences of her time at The Cradle on pages 4-5. Our FY2017 service highlights are summarized on page 6, and on page 7, we spotlight two donors who contributed greatly to the success of our 2017 Giving Tuesday campaign.

An adoptive couple, a Cradle Helpline counselor, and a 1947 Cradle adoptee share their thoughts on how adoption has impacted their lives in a new feature we’re calling “In Their Own Words” on page 9. For our youngest counseling clients, we’re converting a lower level classroom into a play therapy room and could use some supplies. Please turn to page 11 to learn more.

Over the past year I’ve also had the honor of welcoming three new members to our very talented and dedicated Board of Directors. Talita Erickson, who grew up in Brazil, is General Counsel for Barilla America. Barilla has been a generous sponsor of Cradle events for several years and a repeat recipient of the Silver Cradle Award. Samir Wagle is an adoptive dad and a hospitality industry executive who most recently was President and CEO of Protein Bar. Heather Kelley, Managing Director at CIBC Bank USA, is also a Cradle mom. She and her husband Bill adopted their son Will in 2013.

I’m thrilled to be working with Talita, Samir and Heather and the other members of our Board to advance the strategic priorities developed during my first year. Please stay tuned in the months ahead for news about the Our Children initiative and future roundtable events, as well as exciting developments with Adoption Learning Partners’ expansion into the foster parent training arena. We will also keep you up-to-date on the Nursery, adoption activity and our Center for Lifelong Adoption Support.

In the meantime, you’re always welcome to contact me directly with your questions or suggestions. I’m so grateful for your friendship and your partnership in The Cradle’s work.

Warm regards,

Kim Perez, MSW
President & CEO
kperez@cradle.org
Last September, longtime Nevada resident Jenny Seljan Cordisco paid a visit to Evanston with her youngest son, Eddie, to show him the place where she trained as an infant nurse in the early 1950s and went on to train new classes of Cradle nurses. A photo of Jenny in her crisp white uniform, holding a Cradle baby, adorns the wall of our Nursery museum. We asked Jenny, now 82, to travel back 65 years and share with us what it was like to be a nurse at The Cradle in those days.

What made you decide to enter the Infant Nurse Training Program at The Cradle?

I grew up in Wisconsin and was the last of eight children. We didn’t have much money and my father passed away when I was a sophomore in high school. After I graduated, one of my brothers wanted to send me to college. I actually wanted to go to the convent and become a nun, but my older sister said I should think of something else. I just loved babies, and when I learned that The Cradle had a nursing school, I decided, “That’s where I’d like to go.”

How was the program structured?

It was a year’s course. I started in 1953 and graduated in 1954. Then, I stayed for two more years supervising and teaching. We lived in a brick house next to the main building, which had five nurseries: four for babies from the time they were born up to six weeks and a fifth unit upstairs for older babies, sometimes up to a year old.

During training, we worked from 7 at night until 7 in the morning. We had a couple hours off in the middle of the night so we could have our lunch. Sometimes we’d go into the room where the babies were presented and we’d sit in there and play games.

When I worked 7-7, I would make the coffee. There was a great big pot and I remember putting grounds in it, an egg and a pinch of salt. That’s how I was taught.

What did you and the other nurses do in your spare time?

We’d get off at 7 in the morning, have breakfast, and then quite often we’d go horseback riding. There was a wonderful stable not far from The Cradle. My horse’s name was King. We girls also liked to dance, so we would go to Howard Street where the clubs were.

I convinced Miss Mitchell, the head supervisor, to let me and a couple other nurses go to mass each Sunday morning. It was a privilege that I really appreciated. There was a chauffeur, Carl, who had a room at The Cradle. We used to go to his room and listen to music, but we would get into trouble if we were ever caught.

“Taking care of those babies was the joy I had. I still think about that and it always warms my heart.”

(Continued on next page)
Was there a particular baby you grew attached to?

Yes, there was one whose name was Stacy and he was my favorite. He was a little older, maybe three months old, so he was in the unit upstairs. I took him outside for walks in the stroller and took him to the doctor in a taxi. They even let me take him to my room.

In those days they didn’t let the nurses hand the babies to the adopting parents, but they let me give Stacy to his adoptive parents. They were wonderful people, so it was easier to let go of him. But I still cried.

What were your tasks as a supervisor?

The trainees had to learn what I learned. I remember teaching them how to wash their hands, how to hold a baby, everything. You had to scrub with a brush each time you left an infant’s cubicle. Our hands and forearms were often raw. We’d do laundry and fold baby clothes. There was also teaching in the kitchen. They had to learn how to sterilize bottles.

What did you do when you left The Cradle?

One of the gals who had been at The Cradle, Audrey, was working as a nurse for the Cudahy family, who had a meat packing company in Omaha, Nebraska. Audrey was getting married so she asked me if I would consider coming to work for them. I thought this would be something new and different, so I agreed.

The Cudahys had three adopted children at that time. Tinker was two, Hopey was one, and the baby, Toby, was six months old. Toby and I connected just as I had with Stacy at The Cradle. His parents were my role models. Tina and Tony Cudahy always treated me as a niece, not as a nurse. They needed me during winters at their home in Florida and when they adopted a fourth child. During my three years with them I also worked at Yellowstone and at a daycare center.

How did you meet your husband?

One Thanksgiving a former student of mine from The Cradle invited me to visit her and her husband in Hawthorne, Nevada. “Oh Jenny,” she said, “You have to meet this guy, Ed Cordisco, who’s a teacher here. If you met him you’d marry him. He’s the sweetest man.” I went out with him and he proposed on our first date. I didn’t really know him, so we dated for the next three nights and every night for a week when I returned in January. He asked me again after those seven days and I said “yes.”

Ed passed away two years ago after 56 years of marriage. He was my special gift from God and the love of my life. We had four children, three boys and a girl, and I have seven beautiful grandchildren.

What is most memorable about your time at The Cradle?

I loved taking care of those babies. That was my joy. I’d put the older babies in the upper unit in their Teeter Babes, line them up, and I’d sing and dance for them. They used to smile and laugh and clap, which made my heart sing. They were all special.

Jenny acknowledges that in life, “every turn you make, you’re meant to be there.” Without her Cradle connections, she never would have met Ed. “You look at all the things you’ve done and realize that you needed to be there in order to get where you are now,” she says.
The Cradle closed the books on its 2017 fiscal year last September 30. It was a year of transition for the organization – we welcomed a new CEO and new senior staff – as well as a period of planning for the years ahead, as The Cradle approaches its centennial in 2023. We’d like to share with you some of the highlights of the past year and the important work that you supported.

**The Cradle Nursery**

Our onsite newborn Nursery provided a safe, nurturing home for 68 babies, including three with serious special needs. Twenty of these babies went home with their birth families and 48 were placed with adoptive families.

Isaac spent two months in the Nursery’s care before going home with his family in April 2017.

**Expectant Parent Services**

Cradle Helpline counselors fielded inquiries from more than 600 women who were seeking guidance about an unplanned pregnancy. While only 10% of those women made adoption plans for their babies, all received help in some form.

“Besides my mom, I couldn’t have done this without her.”
– 2017 survey comment by a birth parent client about her counselor

**Adoption Learning Partners (ALP)**

ALP, which offers a catalog of 70 online courses and webinars on a wide array of topics related to adoption and foster care, logged over 32,000 enrollments in FY2017.

The pilot of phase of A Learning Place was completed in fall 2017. This new, state-of-the art training platform meets the needs of foster parents with mobile-first design and micro-learning delivery.

Learn more at adoptionlearningpartners.org

**Placements**

64 babies were welcomed home by Cradle families through our domestic adoption program, and three children born in Korea joined Cradle families in the U.S. through our international home study program.

Carl and Kevin became the proud dads of an adorable baby boy in March 2017.

**Our Children**

The Cradle presented two well-received roundtables as part of the ongoing Our Children initiative: “The Color of Education in October 2016 and “Raising Black Girls” in April 2017. Each of these programs has a companion webinar available on ALP.

**Center for Lifelong Adoption Support**

CLAS adoption therapists conducted 1,292 counseling appointments with individuals and families touched by adoption. Our Director of Post Adoption Support provided 222 Informational Consultations for people seeking to learn more about their background or connect with birth family members, and The Cradle offered a number of parenting workshops on topics such as Theraplay® and trust-based parenting.

To learn more, visit cradle.org/CLAS
Remembering Annabelle

1942 Cradle adoptee Annabelle Loud Redway had an unusual childhood. Her father, Gordon Loud, was a prominent archaeologist with the University of Chicago’s Oriental Institute who led major excavations in Israel and Iraq. When Annabelle and her brother John, also a Cradle baby, were young children, the family lived in a town outside of Cairo, Egypt. The Louds returned to the U.S. when Annabelle was eight and settled in Washington, D.C.

It was there that she met her future husband, Laurance Redway, through a mutual friend. “One day she appeared in my mother’s living room with my friend,” Larry recalls, “and her Dalmatian.” The couple had a long distance romance while Annabelle was finishing her studies at Wellesley College in Massachusetts and Larry was working for Procter & Gamble in upstate New York. They married in September of 1963 and raised two daughters in D.C.

Larry says that Annabelle always knew she was adopted and that The Cradle was always extremely important in her life. In 2002, she purchased a brick in memory of her parents for The Cradle’s courtyard. Five years later, she and Larry came for a visit. “It was the first time I was there and for the first time I became aware of just how complicated adoption is,” he observed. “Helping people make difficult decisions and finding the right families for babies is so important.”

Annabelle was a passionate and generous Cradle supporter until her death in 2013 at age 70 following an illness. She and Larry were just a couple months’ shy of their 50th anniversary. He takes comfort in the fact that his daughters live in D.C. with their families. He has four grandchildren and still works full-time as a financial advisor.

Larry also continues to support The Cradle, most recently as a lead donor to our 2017 Giving Tuesday campaign. “I feel that I never would have met Annabelle if it wasn’t for The Cradle,” he says. “And I think the work you do is critical.”

Thanks to Larry and more than 200 other generous friends of The Cradle, together we raised over $100,000 on #GivingTuesday, November 28, 2017.

Hats off to you, StudioNorth!

North Chicago-based advertising and marketing agency StudioNorth conducted a month-long Giving Tuesday 2017 campaign that raised over $2,500 for The Cradle. Employees chose The Cradle based on StudioNorth Account Manager and Cradle dad Rob Schueneman’s personal and compelling story of adopting his daughter Emily, now 17.

These highly creative types came up with fun, Studio-wide activities and incentives throughout November designed to encourage donations. Highlights included: “Collecting for Coffee” (employees chipped in $1 per K-Cup), “Bad Hair for a Good Cause” and “Baggo Happy Hour.”

There were also theme days, such as wear a sweatshirt to work and bring your pet to work, which resulted in a Studio visit on November 22nd by seven cute canines. November 7th was “Hats off to The Cradle,” when employees were encouraged to don their favorite headwear.

StudioNorth CEO Mark Mohr is also a Cradle dad – times four! Between 1996 and 2000, Mark and his wife Maggie adopted two siblings from Haiti and two siblings domestically. The couple also has two biological daughters.

Mark and two members of his team came to The Cradle on December 13th to take a tour, visit the Nursery and present Cradle CEO Kim Perez with their donation.

The Cradle thanks everyone at StudioNorth for their generosity and creativity!

Visit studionorth.com for more info about the agency. To learn more about how your company can partner with The Cradle, please call Sarah at 847.733.3204.
Oh, what a night! Our 2017 Rock The Cradle Gala on October 14th at The Ritz-Carlton in downtown Chicago was a truly spectacular evening, featuring fine dining, exciting auction and raffle prizes, silly games, inspiring testimonials, well-deserved awards, a packed dance floor, and… one gigantic surprise.

Special guest Marcus Lemonis, CEO of Camping World and star of CNBC’s hit reality show, “The Profit,” spoke to Gala attendees about his experience being adopted as an infant from Beirut, Lebanon and growing up in the U.S. He shared that his mom would frequently pull out a favorite book about adoption and read it to him. “What I know for sure is that adoption gave me gratefulness,” he said. “It is a gift and a blessing.”

Following his talk, Cradle President & CEO Kim Perez presented Marcus Lemonis LLC with a Silver Cradle Award, an annual honor recognizing adoption-friendly companies. One of the businesses featured on “The Profit” that Lemonis invested in, Bentley’s Pet Stuff, is owned by Lisa and Giovanni Senafe, adoptive parents of two young boys. Lemonis and the Senafes have formed a strong friendship and are committed to promoting and supporting adoption. For Lemonis, this meant generously sponsoring the Gala and addressing our guests.

But no one anticipated what came next. After accepting his award, Lemonis asked Kim what the fundraising goal was for the night. When she replied that it was $240,000, without missing a beat he announced that if we succeeded, he would match it! Gasp filled the room, followed by enthusiastic applause.

As the evening continued, dinner was served, additional Silver Cradle Awards were given out, items were raffled off, and paddles were raised to support Cradle programs and services. In the end, thanks to the incredible generosity of Marcus Lemonis, our guests, sponsors and underwriters, the challenge was not only met, but exceeded! Our Rock The Cradle Gala raised close to $500,000 to help build and strengthen families.

The Cradle would also like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Cradle Board members and Gala Co-Chairs Jane Cummins and Penelope Savales Boardman, along with the Gala committee, for their hard work in bringing this extraordinary night to fruition.

To see a list of all 2017 Silver Cradle Award recipients, visit cradle.org/silvercradle. For a complete list of Gala sponsors and underwriters, and to view more photos from the event, visit cradle.org/gala.

From left: Jane Cummins, Bobbi and Marcus Lemonis, Karen Porter, Kim and Fabian Perez, Penelope Boardman

Cradle parents Christie and Josh Hartman (JJ ’14 & Zoey ’16), and Nick Paustian and Cher Schwartz (Penny ’16), shared their adoption stories in a video shown to guests.
Adoption was Their First Choice

“From our earliest discussions about starting our own family, adoption was always a part of the conversation. Justin’s dad and aunt were both adopted through The Cradle and it has been a regular part of conversations throughout his life. Heidi has been open to adoption since she was very young and recalls asking her own parents to consider adoption.

“We have no reason to believe we cannot have our own children but we feel very strongly about our first-born being our adopted child. We want him/her to know that he/she was loved and wanted from the very beginning.”

- Excerpt from Heidi and Justin Bush’s adoptive parent profile. Their dream came true on June 20, 2017, when one-month-old Olivia was placed in their arms.

Heidi, Justin and baby Olivia at The Cradle
Justin’s aunt and father are also Cradle babies!

A View from Helpline

“It has been an honor to be a member of the expectant parent team for almost seven years. From my position in Helpline, I have watched our counselors support, advocate and guide women, families and their babies through some of the most difficult decisions and situations imaginable. When I started here, I thought I knew a lot about adoption, having two brothers that were adopted as well as working with families adopting from DCFS in my prior role, but I was humbled to learn I knew very little. I have learned so much over the years about what making this decision means to birth parents and the impact that it has on everyone thereafter. The work our counselors do and the work that everyone does to support them is so important to all of the expectant and adoptive families that the Cradle serves.”

Cradle Counselor Beth Lupo sent this note to colleagues on her last day in November 2017. We were sad to see Beth go and wish her well in her future endeavors. For now, being a mom to three young daughters is keeping her very busy!

Closing the Book on Finding Family

“During the search for my roots, I learned through non-identifiable information The Cradle could legally release that the nurses at The Cradle nicknamed me ‘Reed.’ I discovered that my birth father was a travelling salesman, while my birth mother worked at one of the businesses he served. Back in 1947, I don’t think the term ‘single mother’ existed. I always wondered why I was given up, and I think I answered that. She didn’t have a choice.

“After decades of wondering the long journey was almost over. My significant other mentioned that the final chapter hadn’t been written until I visited the place that nurtured me in its nursery, conducted the background check and finally handed me over to my adoptive parents months after my birth.”

With assistance from The Cradle’s Post Adoption Services department,* 1947 Cradle adoptee Wally Bunker obtained his previously sealed birth record, learned about his birth mother, and connected with two half-sisters. He visited us in June of 2017 and wrote about his experience.

*Visit cradle.org/post-adoption-services for more info.
A New Room for Play Therapy – Supplies Needed!

Children’s natural language is play, so it makes sense to have a therapeutic space where they can work through emotional and behavioral needs, as well as trauma. While The Cradle currently has a suite of three therapy rooms, they are small, and we have few games, toys or art materials to use for therapeutically engaging our younger clients.

Cradle therapists felt that we needed a space where children could explore thoughts and emotions in a different way. Non-directive (or child-centered) play therapy is a counseling method used to help children communicate their inner experiences through the use of toys and play. Children direct their own process rather than the therapist imposing their own ideas of what the child needs to do. In essence, the therapist enters the emotional world of the child.

To that end, we are transforming a roomy classroom on The Cradle’s lower level and plan to stock it with a full battery of toys and art supplies. For children with sensory processing needs, the larger space will allow for greater movement. Cradle volunteers are donating a rug and painting the room.

Our budget for purchasing supplies is small, so we would greatly appreciate the donation of items on our Amazon Wish List. There are so many fun things to choose from, such as jumbo building blocks, a kitchen playset, hand puppets, doll families and more! Most importantly, these items will help kids work through some tough challenges.

To donate items for our new Play Therapy Room, please visit http://a.co/2Lrz1nn

Thank you for your support! We look forward to sharing our progress on this room in the next issue.

Keep your family on T.A.R.G.E.T.

The Cradle is pleased to introduce a new program for Illinois adoptive families with youth aged 10-17.

T.A.R.G.E.T. is a series of workshops to teach teens and parents how to talk about, and then talk through, the normal phases of adolescence that can be stressful for families.

T.A.R.G.E.T. is offered in the home or at the office, for both the teen and family members, at no cost. The program is designed with activities that promote positive interaction and discussion, led by specially-trained facilitators in 8 to 12 sessions.

This is a research study conducted by the National Quality Improvement Center for Adoption Support and Preservation (QIC-AG).

T.A.R.G.E.T. is currently being offered in Cook and DuPage counties and some counties in the Central Region.

Interested in learning more? Contact The Cradle at 847.733.3225 or helpline@cradle.org. There will be a few questions to make sure T.A.R.G.E.T. is the right fit for your family.

Event: LGBTQ Parenting
When: Thursday, August 9, 2018
Where: Center on Halsted, Chicago

In partnership with the Center on Halsted in Chicago’s Lakeview neighborhood, The Cradle is pleased to offer the next roundtable event in the Our Children Education and Empowerment Series. Our panel of LGBTQ parents and the adult children of LGBTQ parents will address sensitive questions such as how to talk comfortably about your family life with friends, acquaintances, classmates, teachers, colleagues and others. Please mark your calendars and join us on August 9th for this important conversation!
Adopted as an infant in 1990 in Indianapolis, Indiana, Hannah Moor is biracial and her parents are white. The family moved to Illinois when Hannah was a young child and eventually settled in Evanston. We were fortunate to have her as a panelist in our recent Raising Black Children Across Racial Lines roundtable. In anticipation of the event, we asked Hannah about her experience growing up as a transracial adoptee, and her experience as a Cradle birth mother.

Did your parents tell you why they decided to adopt transracially?

I never asked flat out, “Why did you adopt a baby of a different race?” I do know that I asked them things like, “Did you know that you were going to get me?” And they always said, “We didn’t care. We wanted you, no matter how you came to us.”

As a child, did people ever ask intrusive questions?

Absolutely. Black people would say, “Why are both of your parents white?” They would put a negative spin on my adoption, asking me things as extreme as, “Did they think they were saving you by adopting a black baby?” But I also got that same kind of treatment from white people, even family members asking my parents, “Why didn’t you adopt a white baby?”

What was it like for you growing up?

We were one of the only families in my neighborhood in Evanston with white parents, so my mother and father made sure to talk to me about race and racial differences. They tried to keep me informed.

But it was difficult. A lot of my black friends, based on my outer appearance, would tell me that I spoke white, or that there was no black in me. I felt like I wasn’t very in touch with that part of myself, my culture. White children looked at me and saw my color from the outside and assumed I should act a certain way or talk a certain way, based on stereotypes I guess.

I did go to Evanston Township High School and it was very mixed, but also segregated. There’s a big divide between white and black in the school. My parents, however, always talked to me about how people are people and there’s nobody better, white or black.

Did your experience as an adopted person inform your decision when you were making an adoption plan for your son?

I have three or four friends who were adopted and I don’t know that any of them had an easy time. All of us had a wonderful upbringing, but being an adopted person definitely had a lot to do with me trying to decide what I was going to do for my son when he was born. It scared me, although I ended up moving forward with it.

My son is biracial as well, so I wanted an interracial couple to raise him. I didn’t want him only to be exposed to his white culture and I didn’t want him only to be exposed to his black culture, because I know how hard that was for me.

Is there one piece of advice you would offer to Caucasian parents who are taking home a child of a different race?

Be on the same page with each other. Stay aware and informed. Make sure you’re sending the same message consistently. If you are a single person looking to adopt, make sure that you have a support system. Make sure that you have people that are going to support you through this and help you answer questions.

Hannah is a hair stylist at an Evanston salon and the mother of a four-year-old son. We appreciate the insights she shared during our February 22nd roundtable. For more information about The Cradle’s Our Children initiative, visit cradle.org/ourchildren.
THE CRADLE IS TURNING 95... HELP US CELEBRATE!

March 12, 2018 marked the 95th anniversary of the day in 1923 when The Cradle Society was officially established. Our founder, Florence Walrath, opened a newborn nursery in the modest brick house that served as The Cradle’s first home. Although the Nursery has changed quite a bit over the years, the training, care and devotion of our staff has not. The needs of our Cradle babies haven’t changed, either.

You can help The Cradle celebrate 95 years of providing exceptional care to **more than 15,800 babies** by making a gift in support of the Nursery. Here are a couple of ways:

- Become a Nursery Angel by sponsoring The Cradle Nursery for a day of your choosing. Go to [cradle.org/donate](http://cradle.org/donate) and select “Nursery Angel” from the pull-down menu.
- Purchase items from our baby registry on Amazon.com. Visit [cradle.org/nurserywishlist](http://cradle.org/nurserywishlist) to see what we need.

Thank you for your generosity!