



## WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES

2015 was a memorable year at The Cradle. For the families who are featured in the stories that follow, it was a life-changing year. A pair of adorable towheaded siblings welcomed home an equally adorable African American baby brother. An accomplished woman realized her dream of becoming a mother. A sweet baby girl found the parents who were meant for her. Two sisters met for the first time, later in life, and discovered they have much in common.

Generous support from Cradle donors helped make these new beginnings and happy endings possible. Your gifts enabled us to care for Shea, Avery and Elena in The Cradle Nursery, and to counsel their birth parents. You helped us prepare the Brodricks, Natasha and the Sabourins to bring their Cradle babies home. Your support helped us connect Joan with her Cradle sister, Maureen.

Enjoy these stories, and thank you.

### Ian and Laney got a baby brother.



Audrey and Scott Brodrick came to The Cradle in early 2014, hoping to adopt a sibling for their two biological children. They were open to a child of any race. On May 1, 2015, a super-smiley 3 ½-week-old baby boy became their son, Shea. The Brodricks have a good relationship with Shea's birth mom, and his big brother and sister, 6-year-old Ian and 4-year-old Laney, are over the moon.

Words cannot express the joy and love Shea has brought into our lives. He is truly the happiest baby we have ever known. His sweet smile and squealing giggles make all who meet him fall instantly in love. Ian and Laney have welcomed Shea with such pride and excitement. The sincerity of their love for their new brother has touched our hearts and it has been amazing to watch them bond as siblings. We are forever grateful to The Cradle for bringing us together.

*(Continued on page 7)*

## CRADLE Events & Offerings

**PARENTING WORKSHOP – Sensory Processing, Self-Regulation... and You**  
with Dan Griffith, Ph.D.

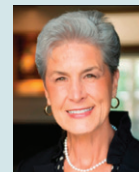


*Dr. Griffith is a clinical pediatric psychologist.*

**Saturday, January 30, 2016**  
9:30 am – 11:30 am at The Cradle

Learn more and register at  
[cradle.org/adoption-workshops](http://cradle.org/adoption-workshops)

**ALP WEBINAR – Attending to Needs, Connecting for Life**



*Dr. Karyn Purvis on Attachment*

*Dr. Purvis is founder and director of the TCU Institute of Child Development.*

**Thursday, February 4, 2016**  
7 pm Central  
[adoptionlearningpartners.org](http://adoptionlearningpartners.org)

**FIRST LOOK FOR CHARITY**  
**Friday, February 12, 2016**  
6 pm – 11:30 pm  
McCormick Place, Chicago  
*Additional info on pg. 6*

**RAISING BLACK BOYS**  
**Roundtable Event**



**Thursday, February 18, 2016**  
The Northern Trust  
50 S. LaSalle St., Chicago  
5:30 pm reception / 6:30 pm program  
*Additional info on pg. 2*

# The Cradle Launches OUR CHILDREN Initiative



**A** February 18 roundtable discussion on "Raising Black Boys" will kick off an exciting new Cradle initiative, *Our Children: An Education and Empowerment Series*.

The Cradle has had a dedicated African American infant adoption program since 1994. Today, around 40% of our annual domestic placements are African American or multiracial babies. We also assist and support families who adopt children internationally from African countries and Haiti.

Educating parents about the myths and realities of modern adoption has always been a central component of The Cradle's mission. Our offerings include courses and webinars on topics such as "Conspicuous Families" and "Identity in Adoption." Still, we feel the need to do more.

We are expanding our focus to address the complex issues around growing up Black in America. Why now?

Race relations are very much in the spotlight today. Here at The Cradle, we have seen a change in the direction and tone of our conversations with our families, particularly those who have adopted African American children.

The Cradle wants to take the lead in addressing the parenting needs of adoptive and foster families who are raising Black children, with a special emphasis on transracial households.

*Our Children* will be a multi-year series of programs and events

aimed at educating families about the realities and injustices their Black children may experience in societal interactions, and providing support to those families. Several peer organizations across the country have committed to joining The Cradle in this initiative by offering events of their own and promoting ours.

"Our goal is to give parents the tools they need to communicate with and prepare their children for a society that is far from color blind," says Nijole Yutkowitz, Director of Resource and Community Development at The Cradle and a Cradle adoptive parent. "We want to help families successfully navigate these difficult dynamics in positive and productive ways."

A calendar of events is below. We look forward to your participation!



*Adopting Nolan has brought so much joy to us. We have also learned so much about ourselves by parenting him. As a conspicuous family, we have met and spoken with many people who we might not otherwise have encountered. We see the world through*

*a different lens now that we are raising a Black child. We are looking forward to participating in the *Our Children* series. Learning about how Nolan's race will impact his experiences in life is extremely important to us. It is imperative that we understand and respect his cultural identity and we are grateful for this opportunity.*

– Jason Ross & Tara Punwani, parents of Nolan, Cradle Class of 2012

## OUR CHILDREN Event Timeline

2016

**Thurs., Feb. 18** *Raising Black Boys* Roundtable  
The Northern Trust  
50 S. LaSalle St., Chicago  
5:30pm Reception; 6:30pm Program



A panel of distinguished African American men will talk about the challenges they face being Black men and fathers in today's society, and the types of conversations families must have with their Black sons. Derrick Young of CBS 2 Morning News will moderate.

**May** *Let's Talk Black Boys* Live Webinar

**July** *Fruitvale Station* Movie Screening

**October** *The Color of Education* Roundtable

2017

**February** *My Black is Beautiful, Too*  
Raising Black Girls Roundtable

**May** *Girl Talk* Live Webinar

**July** *Dark Girls* Documentary Screening

**October** *Keynote Speaker* to be confirmed

2018

**February** *Keynote Speaker* to be confirmed

Please visit [www.cradle.org/ourchildren](http://www.cradle.org/ourchildren) for program updates and tickets.

Dear Friends,



Reading the quotes from the families in our feature story, and looking at the joy in their faces, reminds me why we do what we do at The Cradle. As 2015 comes to an end, we are grateful for all of the clients we were able to serve in the past year, and for everyone who supported our work.

Seventy babies (including two sets of twins!) went home with Cradle families in FY15 through our domestic adoption programs. Four of those placements were the siblings of previously placed Cradle children, and seven were babies with serious special medical needs. We also assisted eight families who adopted children internationally – seven from China and one from Ethiopia.

Our expectant parent team fielded more than 1,100 inquiries from women seeking guidance about an unplanned pregnancy, and The Cradle Nursery lovingly cared for 87 infants. Our Center for Lifelong Adoption Support continued to expand, adding the option of Theraplay® to our rapidly growing counseling practice.

The generosity of Cradle families and friends, like you, helps us provide these life-changing services. Your support, for example, enables us to subsidize adoption fees for special needs and sibling placements.

Looking ahead to 2016, we are very excited about some new Cradle projects, such as the “Our Children” initiative described on page 2. We hope you will take advantage of some of the outstanding programs we have lined up.

To those of you who have made your year-end donation to The Cradle, thank you very much. If you would still like to make a gift by December 31, please turn to page 5 for more information.

I wish you and your loved ones a wonderful holiday season and New Year.

Warm regards,



Julie S. Tye

## Teens, Parenting and Asking for Help *by Maureen Kelly*



Raising a teenager is the Big Leagues of parenting. The physical exhaustion of the infant and toddler years is replaced with emotional exhaustion. It's tough to balance a teen's need for independence with the intense parental desire to keep them safe and healthy. And for adoptive parents, there's another piece. We regularly ask ourselves “Is this just normal teen angst or is this adoption?”

Many of you know me as part of The Cradle Foundation team. But I have another important job. I am a single mom to Lia, whom I adopted from Vietnam when she was six months old. She's now 14.

When Lia and I decided to go on a homeland visit, I met for a few sessions with one of the counselors in our Center for Lifelong Adoption Support (CLAS). I wanted to prepare myself and my daughter for the emotional issues that might come up on the trip. It was really helpful for me to sort out my expectations and worries and to separate those from my child's experience.

Lia recently participated in a 6-week group for adopted teens facilitated by two Cradle counselors, including Carmen Knight, herself an international adoptee. The group focused on identity, what teens think about being adopted, and issues of grief and loss.

“It was cool to be part of the adoptee group and I especially liked the counselors,” said Lia. “We were able to connect quickly because we shared a common experience of being adopted.”

I know personally it can be a challenge to reach out for help. The biggest hurdle I've felt, and that I've heard from fellow adoptive parents, sounds something like this: “If I ask for help, am I admitting I don't know what I'm doing? I passed the home study years ago. I've been a parent for a long time now. I'm supposed to know what I'm doing!”

Adoption therapist Dori Fujii is reassuring to all who reconnect for counseling help. “We are thrilled when one of our families contacts us. We know adoption is a lifelong process, and things come up, especially in the tween/teen years. We really mean it when we say we are here – supporting you always.”

Visit [cradle.org/center-lifelong-adoption-support](http://cradle.org/center-lifelong-adoption-support) to learn more about CLAS.

## A NIGHT OF LAUGHTER, FRIENDSHIP AND FAMILY

“I feel really lucky that I found The Cradle,” *Saturday Night Live* alumna, actress, author and adoptive parent Julia Sweeney told the more than 200 guests at The Cradle Ball on October 17.

A Google search led Sweeney to The Cradle last year. The Wilmette resident, who adopted her daughter Mulan from China in 2001, was investigating post-adoption services and ended up connecting with Cradle counselor Dori Fujii.

Sweeney, who says that she loves The Cradle, enthusiastically agreed to be our guest speaker at this year’s gala. As she read excerpts from her poignant and hilarious essay collection, *If It’s Not One Thing, It’s Your Mother*, The Ritz-Carlton ballroom erupted in laughter.

“I’ve done many charity events, but this feels different,” Sweeney said. “People are so committed to the cause. It’s like a family.”



Ball Chair Kim Simonton, Julia Sweeney and Kathy Hart

Another member of The Cradle family, Kathy Hart of the *Eric & Kathy Morning Show* on Chicago’s 101.9fm THE MIX, was the evening’s emcee. Hart, who has two biological children, Xander and Annika, adopted Cradle baby Allen in 2008.

“Adoption opened a place in my heart I didn’t know I had,” she reflected. “The Cradle has always been there for us, for Allen and for his birth mom.”

Hart stepped into the role of auctioneer with confidence and flair, directing the bidding on superb items such as a week’s stay at a privately owned Italian villa. During “An Invitation to Give” she encouraged guests to pledge their support for critical services like The Cradle Nursery, which costs the agency \$2,000 per day to operate.

Other highlights of the evening included an extensive silent auction with bidding by tablet or smartphone, a raffle for one of three deluxe trips, and presentation of the 2015 Silver Cradle



Cradle adoptee Karen Roy and her husband Jon traveled from Oregon to attend the Ball!

Awards by Cradle President Julie Tye. Each year at the Ball, The Cradle recognizes Chicago-area companies that support their employees by providing generous adoption benefits.

Following dinner and the program, guests filled the dance floor as the talented nine-piece band, Greenlight, played hits ranging from Motown to Pharrell Williams.

Thanks to the hard work of Cradle Ball Chair Kim Simonton and the members of The Cradle Ball Committee, and to the generosity of our sponsors, donors, attendees and special guests, the 21st annual Ball was a smashing success, raising over \$130,000 for Cradle programs and services.

Go to [cradlefoundation.org/ball](http://cradlefoundation.org/ball) to view more photos as well as a complete list of sponsors and Silver Cradle recipients.



Cradle Ball Committee member Suzanne Whiting and her daughter Hope

*Cradle donors make family possible*



*Give the gift of family this holiday season by supporting The Cradle.*



Donations from Cradle families and friends like you will help care for babies in the Nursery, provide counseling to pregnant women and create happy families.

Visit [www.cradlefoundation.org/donate](http://www.cradlefoundation.org/donate) to make a secure online gift, or use the envelope enclosed.

*Thank you for supporting The Cradle.*

The  
CRADLE®  
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## A VERY COMMITTED CRADLE MOM



Pat with her daughter Pam in Sedona

**A**t age 80, Cradle adoptive parent Patricia McPherson lives on 12 acres of land in the Iowa countryside and feels blessed that she can still take care of it. She also feels blessed by her two daughters, Pamela and Andrea, and nine grandchildren.

Pat and her husband were living in Homewood, Illinois when they came to The Cradle. "I dearly loved our caseworker," she recalls. "We waited about two years and then got this beautiful little redheaded girl." That was 1964; Pamela's sister Andrea joined the family in 1967.

Pat volunteered with The Cradle's South Suburban Auxiliary, chairing the annual Fashion Show benefit for two years in the 1970s. She also participated in The Cradle's newly formed high school outreach program (now called Volunteers for Adoption Education), bringing Pam along to join her in talking to students about adoption.

When Illinois enacted a law in 2011 enabling adult adoptees to access their original birth certificates, Pat told her daughters it would be fine with her if they wanted to contact their birth mothers. "I felt eternally grateful to these women who had the

courage to surrender their children for adoption," she explains.

A generous Cradle donor for many years, Pat has been making annual gifts of appreciated stock since 2007. She enjoys the ease of donating stock while avoiding the capital gains tax.

When asked why she supports The Cradle, Pat cites the agency's professionalism. "It is the quality of work that goes into the placement of children," she says, "and the compassion that goes into both sides of the adoption equation. You can count on The Cradle."

## Attention Car (and Cradle) Enthusiasts!

Be sure to save the date of **Friday, February 12** for First Look for Charity at the Chicago Auto Show. Now in its 25th year, this benevolent black-tie preview event features a "first look" at hundreds of new cars and trucks, top-shelf hors d'oeuvres and beverages, live entertainment and the chance to win a 2016 Lincoln MKX or 2016 Jeep Renegade.

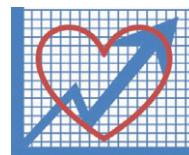
Once again, The Cradle is one of 18 organizations that will benefit from First Look. Our volunteer committee, led by Linda and Bill Stasek, is busy planning The Cradle's private party, beginning one hour before the main event in a McCormick Place reception room. Guests at our Route 66-themed party will enjoy food and drink, music, games, a private coat check, raffle, silent auction and more.

Tickets are \$250; [visit cradlefoundation.org/firstlook](http://visit.cradlefoundation.org/firstlook) for additional info.



## Gifts that Benefit The Cradle – and You!

If you are at least 70.5 years old, you may be able to make charitable contributions of up to \$100,000 from your IRA and they will not be counted toward your taxable income. Donations can satisfy any required minimum distributions for the year and will reduce your adjusted gross income. Making such a gift to The Cradle won't deplete your cash and will support children and families who need your help. Learn more at [cradle.planmygift.org](http://cradle.planmygift.org) or contact your IRA custodian.



As you consider your year-end giving, we encourage you to think about donating appreciated stock directly to The Cradle. You will pay no capital gains tax and you can take a charitable deduction of its full market value.

To gift stock, please visit [cradlefoundation.org/stock](http://cradlefoundation.org/stock) or call Brooke Voss at **847.733.3204**.

Thank you for keeping The Cradle close to your heart!

## WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES

(continued from page 1)

### Natasha became a Mom.



Natasha Brown adopted her daughter Avery in March 2015 as a single mom. Her own mother, Janie, was at The Cradle on Avery's placement day, supporting her daughter and cuddling her adorable new granddaughter. Natasha says she feels lucky and blessed to see Avery's smiling eyes, every day.

*Although it's been an adjustment, it felt like a natural fit from the beginning, like it was always part of God's plan for us to be together. I never knew how overjoyed my heart could feel with LOVE for my daughter. Sometimes we just look at each other and she will give me the biggest smile. She is an absolute joy to me.*

*My entire family and network of close friends has rallied around Avery to create this village for her. She is our princess. I love her completely and look forward to nurturing her and raising her into a compassionate, smart, conscious and beautiful human being.*

### Elena found her family.



Elena was born with Down syndrome and had a prolonged hospital stay due to feeding issues and the need for intestinal surgery. During this time, Cradle volunteer Cuddlers visited Elena in the hospital and our counselors networked to find just the right family for her. She came to The Cradle Nursery in late January 2015, at age 7 weeks, and went home on February 10 with a Chicago-area couple, Jennifer and Besset Sabourin. They couldn't be happier to be Mom and Dad to this radiant little girl.

*The only way we can explain it is that it was meant to be – we were meant to be her parents, and she was meant to be our baby. Ellie is such a special girl, and we can't imagine our lives without her. The amount of love, joy, and light she has brought to our lives is immeasurable!*

### Joan found a sister.

In the fall of 2014, with help from The Cradle's Nina Friedman, Director of Post Adoption Support, Joan Andrews found her sister, Maureen Donohue, who was placed through The Cradle in 1944. Their mother had passed away in 2009. This summer, Joan traveled from her home in Pennsylvania to upstate New York to visit Maureen and meet her daughter, Elizabeth. The sisters learned that they both have grandsons named Ryan.



Maureen and Joan, July 2015

Joan writes: *We seem to discover more connections each time we are together. Our conversations are always animated, often with a great deal of laughter. We seem to be on the same page, no matter what the topic. For example, I recently told her: 'I'm going to see the play The Cherry Orchard this weekend.' Maureen: 'Oh, I just love Chekhov!' Neither of us had a sister growing up, so we are cherishing this time we have together now. We feel so blessed!*



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## And Baby Makes Three



Kyle and Kelly Smith took home their adorable Cradle baby, Declan, on October 7 and attended The Cradle Ball ten days later.

We congratulate and thank them!

## Stay Connected!

There are many ways to connect with The Cradle and keep up-to-date on what's happening. You can read this newsletter as well as the *Cradle Connections* e-newsletter (if you're not receiving it, please go to [cradlefoundation.org](http://cradlefoundation.org) and click on the **SIGN UP** button).

You can also follow The Cradle on social media:



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