



**Children first,
and always.**

Welcome to
Adoption Rhode Island's
2019 National Adoption Month
Celebration and Award Ceremony



featuring
Rhode Island's 15th Annual
Heart Gallery

an exhibit of portraits of Rhode Island
children waiting for permanency

*Help yourself to refreshments and children's activities in the hallway above the Bell Area.
Limited seating for the program is available in the Rotunda and Bell Area,
with standing room around the surrounding stairs.
Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times.*

Welcome

Howard Dulude, Vice President, Board of Directors - Adoption Rhode Island

Remarks

Wamazetta Jones, Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services
The Honorable Michael B. Forte, Chief Judge, RI Family Court

Opening of the Program

Darlene Allen, CEO & Executive Director - Adoption Rhode Island

Remarks

Kevin Aucoin, Acting Director, RI Department of Children, Youth and Families
Jennifer Griffith, RI Child Advocate, Office of the Child Advocate

Creative Performance

Grace - Presenting Self-Authoring Poem, "I Was"

Award Presentations

Advocacy Awards

The Honorable Paul T. Jones
Kristen Cuddy
Cecily Kerr Ziegler

Above and Beyond Awards

Katherine Lennon
Terry Carr
Kelly McCaffery

Beacon of Hope Award

Lise M. Iwon

Community Partner Awards

Maureen Grillo/Associated Builders & Contractors
CISO ToGo, LLC
Horizon Beverage

Friend of Adoption Awards

Joan Corey
Lauren Tarpley
David Welsh

Kids Helping Kids Awards

No Debate About It - 4H Club
Lucas Verrecchia

Video Presentation

Courtesy of Massimoto Media

The Heart Gallery

15th Annual Heart Gallery Introduction - Beth Capron
Dedication in Memory of Nick Cardi, Jr. for his commitment to RI children in care.
Recognition of Heart Gallery Supporters

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony & Heart Gallery Viewing

State Room

Advocacy Award

This award honors individuals and organizations whose support and commitment help improve the lives of foster and adopted children, adults and families

The Honorable Paul T. Jones

For the past 3 summers, Magistrate Jones has been assigned by Chief Judge Michael Forte to a special calendar specifically for youth with the goal of Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA), who are on track to age out of DCYF care. Magistrate Jones' commitment to improving the lives of vulnerable youth was clearly demonstrated in his approach to the APPLA court hearings. More often than not, our youth are scared and anxious to enter a courtroom. Magistrate Jones' calm demeanor created a courtroom environment that was welcoming and comfortable for youth. He treated each case before him with respect, kindness, compassion, and competence, ensuring that every youth felt heard, understood, and certain about participating in their hearing. He also strongly valued team members' opinions while holding each member accountable to ensure that all efforts were in place to best help each youth to succeed. Magistrate Jones' support and commitment to the foster care and adoption community is greatly appreciated and it is with honor that we present him with the Advocacy award for his dedication, compassion, and leadership in empowering youth and young adults.

Kristen Cuddy

Kristen is a staff attorney for the Office of the Court Appointed Special Advocate at the Rhode Island Family Court. Before becoming a guardian ad litem for abused and neglected children in the care of DCYF, she was an associate at a banking and finance practice firm, representing banking institutions and other commercial lenders. This transition appeared to be seamless for Kristen - she jumped right into the child welfare system and started making an impact almost immediately. She has fiercely advocated for the inclusion of those she represents in all areas where decisions are being made, for placement in levels of care that are appropriate, for quick and safe reunifications, and for thoughtful transition planning for youth who are exiting the foster care system. Kristen's advocacy efforts also extend far beyond the courtroom. You will often find her cheering on the children at high school graduations or loading her car up with gifts to distribute during the holidays.

Kristen's knowledge and understanding of trauma, dedication to those she represents, ability to hold others accountable, and her great sense of humor make her a valued partner on the interdisciplinary teams that she is a member of. She is an inspiration to us all, and a reminder to never stop advocating and showing compassion to children in our state's care.

Cecily Kerr Ziegler

Older youth in foster care face many challenges in their journey towards independence. These barriers to success are exacerbated for youth who are exiting the foster care system undocumented. Without legal immigration status, young adults in care are not able to work, obtain financial aid for college, access government assistance and healthcare, and live with the threat of deportation. Cecily Kerr Ziegler is a staff attorney for the Immigrant Victims Rights' Project at Dorcas International Institute of R.I., and a tireless advocate for undocumented children in foster care. She has helped a number of youth apply for special immigrant juvenile status, lawful permanent residency, and citizenship. As a member of the R.I. Immigrant Coalition, she has worked with the DCYF and advocated for policies to identify, refer, and provide legal immigration services to those who are impacted by foster care. Through her work, Cecily is bringing much needed attention to the children and families who intersect with the immigration and child welfare systems, and the unique barriers immigrant children face in achieving permanency.

Above and Beyond Award

Honoring Social Workers and Administrators from the Department of Children, Youth and Families for their distinguished service.

Katherine Lennon

Katherine Lennon has been a member of the Region 1 Family Service Unit at DCYF for over five years now. During this time she has prided her work on promoting permanency, whether reunification, relational permanency, or adoption, for all youth on her caseload. She advocates strongly to ensure children on her caseload have a chance to thrive under the care of positive connections who will offer them the future they deserve. There are endless examples of her tireless work in support of the most vulnerable population in our state.

When asked what drives her, Katherine responded “it’s my kids....not only my home children but my work children too.” She went on to state that Adoption Rhode Island helps her and her work by being her co-pilot.....”the ying to my yang; my work spouse. On some of our cases, we are the only people that don’t change and are there for the youth’s entire journey.” This is the true importance of our work. Katherine, thank you for your endless commitment to child welfare.

Terry Carr

With 36 years of child-welfare experience working in various positions at DCYF, adoption has always been the favorite part of Terry Carr’s job. Terry is a strong advocate for permanency and believes all children deserve a family. In her current position, Terry is able to help many families navigate the adoption journey. She puts many families “at ease” as they prepare for adoption legalization. Terry has been a constant source and wealth of knowledge about services for families and is the first one providers will call when there are questions about adoption benefits. She is responsive to providers and families and always has a positive attitude. It is with great pleasure we present Terry Carr with Adoption Rhode Island’s Above and Beyond Award.

Kelly McCaffery

When we think about what it means to go “Above and Beyond”, we think of a person who exhibits ambition, confidence, passion, and empathy...that person is Kelly McCaffery. Kelly has been a Social Case Worker II in the Wakefield region at DCYF for the past 6 years. Kelly’s commitment to permanency is evident through her ability to successfully match youth to families. She is passionate about family search and engagement and is dedicated to exploring all potential kin relationships to promote permanency and maintain family connections. Once a child is placed she supports that committed adult through the process and responds to their needs to help maintain a positive and loving environment. Her focus on maintaining sibling relationships is unmatched. This past summer, a young man on her case load graduated high school and was planning to attend a graduation party alone...Kelly did not let that happen. With short notice, Kelly attended the party on a Friday afternoon with 3 of the young man’s siblings. For older youth on her caseload, she goes above and beyond to ensure they have the supports they need to graduate high school and prepare for college or other career paths. Kelly’s “never give up energy” is contagious and appreciated as a value engrained in all that she does. Adoption Rhode Island is proud to present her with the Above and Beyond Award.

Beacon of Hope Award

This award honors individuals, businesses and others who have a strong commitment to providing hope for children.

Lise M. Iwon

Lise Iwon is a force for good. Whether it is her strong advocacy and powerful voice in the courtroom or at the statehouse, her seemingly never-ending energy in rallying support for the annual Duffle Bag Bash, or the hundreds of ways she quietly contributes to making life better for the most vulnerable children and families. ARI is honored and proud to recognize Lise as a Beacon of Hope who dedicated her entire legal career to improving lives, and who, today in her 'retirement' works tirelessly on behalf of those who need her most. There is tremendous depth to her impact that is nearly impossible to measure. She cares deeply about improving the lives of others and making Rhode Island a better place for all of us, and she takes action to make things happen. It is an honor to present Lise Iwon with the Beacon of Hope Award.

Community Partner Award

An award given to individuals, organizations, businesses and groups who have demonstrated commitment, compassion and vision for waiting children and adoptive families.

Maureen Grillo/Associated Builders and Contractors

Several years ago Maureen Grillo, the President of Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) Associated Builders and Contractors reached out to Adoption RI, wanting to help children in foster care by collecting and donating items that could be of use to our youth, particularly those in our Teen Focus Program. Over time, they became more and more involved with Teen Focus. Maureen and her team understand that, for many of our teens, college may not be the road they choose to follow. They know that the trades can offer an alternative to those who prefer to work with their hands, and they wanted to help introduce our youth to that possibility. As a result, ABC has offered our teens a chance to see opportunities available to them in the trade industry. ABC has provided hands-on experience for these youth so they can determine which industry may be one in which they would be interested in pursuing a career. We are forever indebted to Maureen and the members of ABC for seeing the potential in our teens and giving them these opportunities. It is for their generosity and commitment to giving older youth in care a fighting chance that we are honored to call the Associated Builders and Contractors a very much valued Community Partner.

CISO ToGo, LLC

If ever there were a cybersecurity superhero, it would be Wade Richmond, CEO of CISO ToGo! Swooping in to assist Adoption RI with our technology and risk management needs, Wade has been instrumental in not only helping us to develop partnerships in the IT community, but also in facilitating a “roadmap” to bring Adoption RI into 2020 with updated hardware, software, and security. Adoption RI is excited and beyond appreciative to Wade not only for his professional expertise, but also for his strong alignment to our mission, believing that every person deserves to feel that they are safe and know that are loved unconditionally. We cannot thank Wade for being our superhero and Community Partner!

Horizon Beverage

Adoption RI is proud to recognize the thoughtfulness and generosity of the employees of Horizon Beverage for their extraordinary fundraising efforts over the past years. From car washes to dress down days, this enterprising group has raised thousands of dollars to send children and teens impacted by foster care to summer camp. Their efforts give a seat at a summer campfire and a chance to just be a kid to so many children who miss out on the kinds of fun and memorable experiences that should be part of every childhood. Theirs is a priceless gift! Their kindness and hard work helps to raise awareness of foster care and the amazing children waiting to be adopted, while also bringing tremendous joy and life-long memories to so many of these amazing children. We are thrilled to present this Community Partner Award to Horizon Beverage for their commitment to bringing hope and love into the lives of children.

Friend of Adoption Award

This award honors individuals and groups who volunteer their time, talents and resources, often engaging others in their efforts to help support the needs of children in RI foster

Joan Corey

Joan has been a friend of Adoption Rhode Island for 20 years. Children are her passion and through her journey, she has certainly found her niche in photographing children and families. Joan enjoys letting children be who they are in the moment and has a wonderful ability to capture that in a candid picture. Over the years, Joan has generously volunteered her time and talent in photographing children and families for the Heart Gallery, Forever Sibling Camp, Sibling Game Nights, Gala and other Adoption Rhode Island events. Joan will tell you, she has a soft spot for photographing siblings at camp. It means the world to her that siblings are sharing time together, exploring the outdoors and creating memories of their camp experience - and even moreso that she is able to capture these memories for them to treasure forever. We have seen the joy on children's faces as they show off their photo albums and scrapbooks. We have heard the stories of how the children keep the photos of their siblings by their bed each night, and we have seen the glow of pride in their eyes when they witness the unveiling of their Heart Gallery portraits. Joan feels she has been given so much in her life. The universe has brought her a gift, and her reward is being able to give back to others. We are delighted to recognize Joan as a friend of adoption and are grateful for her enthusiasm, for sharing her talent of photography, and for all she does for kids, siblings and families.

Lauren Tarpley

We met Lauren a little over a year ago when she attended her first Duffle Bag Bash. In a short amount of time, Lauren became more and more involved with ARI, making many positive contributions in the adoption, and ARI community. In addition to serving as a member of our Gala Host Committee, Lauren also became a mentor to an older youth in foster care and has provided opportunities for enrichment experiences, including a weekend trip to New York City. Her diverse professional experience by land, air, and sea has helped the youth she mentors explore potential career opportunities. Most recently, Lauren became a landlord to 3 young adults in the Voluntary Extension of Care Program.

Lauren made sure their first apartment would be a home they could be proud of - providing them with a fully furnished and decorated space that included cable, wifi, and all utilities. She is also helping to ease their transition into adulthood by offering ongoing support to strengthen their independent living skills. Lauren is a compassionate person these young people can turn to when they're faced with life's challenges, or are in need of a mixing bowl. She is a reminder that you don't have to be a foster/adoptive parent, or even work in child welfare to make a difference in the lives of children in foster care.

David Welsh

Dave has been actively involved with Adoption RI for over 10 years. In addition to being an adoptive parent and a committed volunteer, Dave is actively involved as a member of our Tuesday's Child/Arpin Group Golf Committee, helping to plan and participating in each year's tournament. Dave is always willing to help ARI whenever possible! Whether organizing a benefit dress down day at RI Housing, finding donations for raffle and auction events, or lending a hand with sponsor signage, Dave is always on hand to help make our event planning work easier, so we can focus on the big picture of helping kids in care. Dave has volunteered at our past phonathon events, attended our Gala, and continues to look for new ways to help us in our mission. For all of the ways that Dave has supported the mission of Adoption Rhode Island, he is well deserving of the Friend of Adoption Award.

Kids Helping Kids Award

An award recognizing children and youth in the community who take it upon themselves to do something special for the children in state care

No Debate About It 4H Club

Upon learning that many children in foster care do not get to experience the joys of childhood that most kids do, RI's 4H Club - 'No Debate About It' reached out to Adoption RI hoping to help make the lives of foster kids a little better. They quickly went to work with a goal of collecting as many child-friendly items as possible. Putting their heads together, this resourceful group obtained a grant, coordinated business donations and rallied the community to also get involved with their mission. Seeing even further opportunity to raise awareness - and donations, 'No Debate About It' challenged several other 4H clubs throughout the state to compete for the most donations collected.

These other clubs included the East Greenwich Avengers, Trail Blazers, Savvy Showmen, 4-Ever Amigos, Blueberry Patchers, SRI 4-H Dairy and the winning club - Tri Cap! Among these compassionate groups, they were able to collect sheets, tee shirts, socks, art supplies, backpacks, stuffed animals, and other assorted supplies. We are so proud of the kindness and commitment to service these young people showed, and proud to recognize them with the Kids Helping Kids award.

Lucas Levy

Halloween is a time of year that many kids look forward to. It is a chance to dress up, go to parties, carve pumpkins and go trick or treating. When Luke Verrecchia heard that there are kids that don't have a chance to go trick or treating with their siblings, attend neighborhood parties or even carve pumpkins, he knew he wanted to do something for them.

For his 14th birthday, Luke decided to turn the focus away from himself and onto helping kids in foster care. He turned to friends and family for support, and collected and donated a number of pumpkins for kids to be able to carve at Adoption RI's sibling Halloween event. He also put together bags of goodies for the kids to enjoy with their siblings at the event. We are so grateful that Luke thought about kids in foster care and took action to make it a fun day for them, and happy to award him with the Kids Helping Kids award.

*Congratulations to all and thank you
for your continued support!*



290 West Exchange Street, Suite 100

Providence, RI 02903

401-865-6000 • AdoptionRI.org

*15th Annual
Heart Gallery Children*

Aliyah	Laurahli & Jacob
Alexxis	Marianna
Florencia	Marquies
Haiden	Mylikai
Jakahri	Reinaldo
James	Trinity
Jayson	

Featured Family

The Lucini Family

Heart Gallery Photographers

Joan Corey Photography
Catherine Hellman Photography
Gene Hutnak Photography
Keith Jochim Photo
Diane Miller Photography
Oggi Photo, Julie Brigidi
Options Photography
Sabrina Scolari Photography
David Silverman Photography
Laura Vaillancourt Photography

3D Virtual Heart Gallery

Innovative Visuals - Doug Fingliss and Laura Vaillancourt

**Heart Gallery portraits and booklets printed courtesy of
Printmakers, Inc., Pawtucket, RI**

**Gallery easels donated by the Verrecchia Family in memory of
Edward and Agnes Macari**