



# CUB Communicator

Dec 2021

Winter Edition



Welcome to our newly styled newsletter! Just turn the page! In this edition of the CUB newsletter you will find out what is up and coming with CUB, get details on the film for our 45th Anniversary, and hear some follow up info from a few of the presenters who led us at the recent stimulating retreat in Marina del Rey, California.

## WHAT'S NEW FOR '22



### NEW INVITING CUB WEBSITE COMING VERY SOON!

We have been busy modernizing our website and overhauling our digital operations to support the ease of automation. You'll receive more information soon but expect to be delighted and relieved by how easy it will be to manage your membership and keep up to date with all things happening at CUB!



### SMILE WHILE YOU SHOP

AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support CUB every time you shop, at no cost to you. Just sign up at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), select CUB as the recipient, and then place all your orders using [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) (instead of [amazon.com](https://amazon.com)) and Amazon will donate 0.5% of all your eligible purchases to CUB. This is such an easy way to make your shopping dollars benefit CUB! If you'd like to make a donation directly to CUB, you may do so by [clicking here](#).



### NATIONAL CUB ZOOM SUPPORT GROUP

Starting Saturday, January 22, 2022, and held on the 4th Saturday of each month from 1-4 PM PST / 4-7 PM EST, our new National CUB Zoom Support Group will be hosted by Jan Friel, a birthmother who joined CUB in 1988 and has been facilitating the popular CUB Zoom Support Group in California though out the pandemic. We'll have more details to share soon, but we are very excited for this new way to support our entire community year 'round!



## CELEBRATING CUB'S 45th ANNIVERSARY

**CREATING SOCIAL SPACE:  
CUB's Legacy of Connection,  
Support, and Determination**  
(created by Lisa Elaine Scott)

[Watch the Video](#)

To honor CUB's 45 year landmark Anniversary this year, we've made a 20-minute film featuring many of our early founders and many contributing members through time, right up to our current president. We were determined and honored to have these birthparents' voices heard, especially since we are not accustomed to seeing many birthparents on film. When I was researching through the CUB Archives and History Channel, I read many of the earlier newsletters, news clippings, articles, and poems that I felt were still very relevant to much of our shared experiences today. Although everything has changed, sometimes it feels like nothing has changed, and I think you may agree when you watch the film. There were so many people who have contributed to CUB over the years, all our members and allies, board members, regional directors, support group leaders, newsletter editors and contributing writers, retreat committees and presenters, letter writers, and those who participate in our online support forum, all the members who have ever been to a support group, and those who have gotten or given support to those in our community. CUB is here because of all of us; it's where we can get support and speak the same language.

We tried to include as many people as possible in the film and still keep within a reasonable length. We want to honor everyone in our community and thank you, and we are glad you are here. We want to thank each of our generous interviewees, whom I was personally inspired by. We are grateful for their modeling determination to make things better for birthparents and adoptees, by contributing their time and efforts, and for their huge heart for our community. We want to give a big, warm thank you to Lisa Elaine Scott for doing all the interviewing and for putting in many hours of her personal time into creating this film for CUB as her contribution to our community. Happy 45th Anniversary CUB and to our community, past, present, and future! Here is the link to the film, please enjoy! [Film-CREATING SOCIAL SPACE](#)

If you have thoughts about this film or memories or stories of your own experience that you would like to share about CUB please let us know, we would love to share them! Just email me at [Region5dir@cubirthparents.org](mailto:Region5dir@cubirthparents.org).

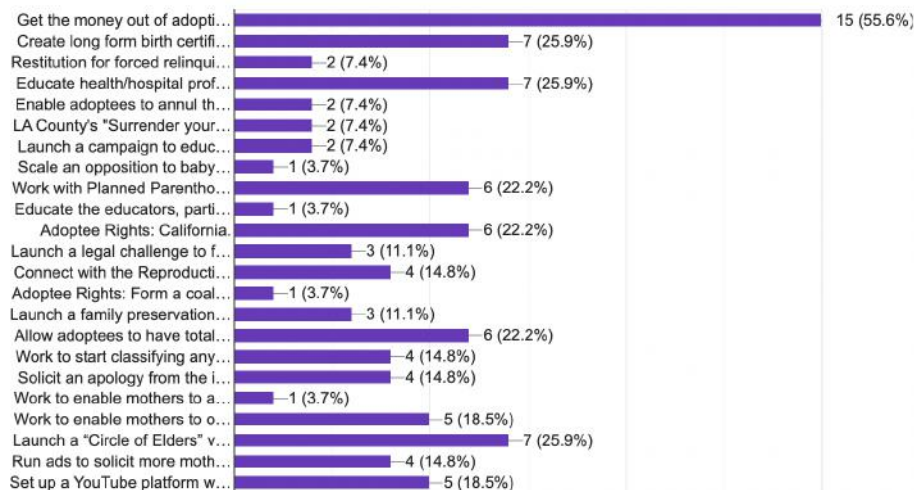
Thank you,

Marina Tunes-Nichols

# CUB RETREAT 2021

## Follow up from 'Harnessing The Power of Mothers' Session

If you attended the retreat and the session titled 'Harnessing the Power of Mothers: Where do we go from here?' then you likely shared what things you are passionate about getting accomplished in the adoptee/mother rights community. The session allowed for ample time to collaborate with each other and come up with a list of things we could do now to help move our cause along. And it's clear the most important thing to all of you is getting the money out of adoption! See the results of our post-event survey to the right here. Session leaders will be taking the results back to the [Catholic Mothers for Truth & Transparency](#) group to see what the potential next steps could be. Thank you to everyone who weighed in and for making this session such a special one!



## List of resources cited in the Connecticut advocacy part of the session:

- [Written Public Testimony to Connecticut General Assembly](#) with 45 co-signers including 3 actual Connecticut Catholic Charities Agreements.
- [Catholic Birthmothers to Legislators: Help Us Heal](#), article with video that ran in the CT Mirror after a tough House of Reps debate (that ended in passage) in an effort to curb the upcoming Senate debate.
- [Keeping identities of birth parents secret doesn't just hurt the adopted](#), article that ran in the Hartford Courant—both print and online—the Sunday before we began receiving assurances from the Senate they were taking up the bill for final passage.
- [Catholic Mothers Vimeo Channel](#), used on social like [this tweet](#).
- [2018 Letter to Connecticut General Assembly from pro-women's organizations](#) endorsing the Adoptee Rights Bill as restorative and in the best interests of women. (This was the first time we started talking openly about what Baby Scoop Era women went through. It was received by supporting legislators in such a way that female legislators began to champion the Adoptee Rights Bill and we secured our House champion, Rep. Cristin McCarthy Vahey (D- Fairfield) who in the end, along with Senator Steve Cassano (D- Manchester), would bring the bill home.
- [Birth mothers say a bill granting adoptees access to their original birth records is a key step toward healing](#), an article featuring Karen Quesnel and the Catholic Mothers group that ran in the Hartford Courant the Monday after the Senate passed the bill.



## Follow up from The Vance Twins



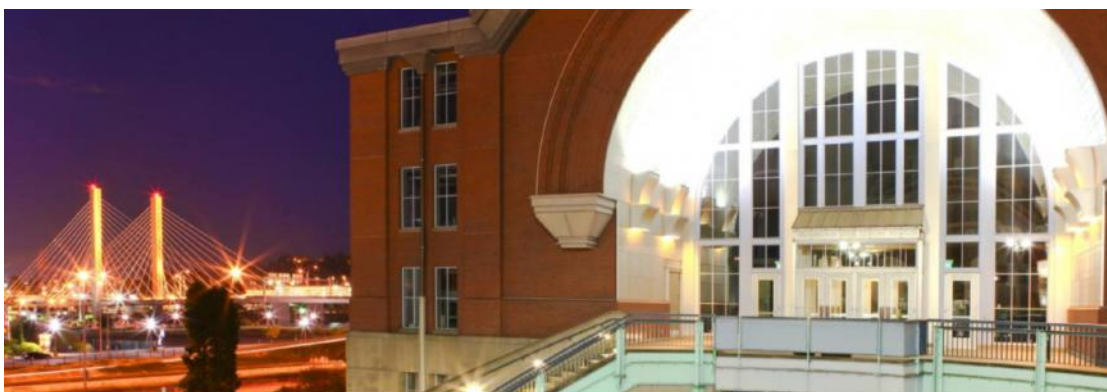
Hi CUB Members,

My sister, Jennette, and I really valued the time we had in your presence at the October retreat celebrating 45 years of your work. We think your members are awesome. Thank you for inviting my twin and me to present on the authors' panel. It was a great experience. I wanted to update you on the Adoption Trafficking Awareness Symposium that I had briefly mentioned during my PowerPoint talk.

My sister and I just secured the Washington State History Museum for the event which will take place this coming summer on Saturday, June 18th, 2022. (We originally hoped for the library but they stopped holding events since 2019). However, we are so excited because the auditorium inside the museum is a much more intimate and safe place for participants to share our expertise and stories. (Safety is our number one priority.) I don't know about you, but in years past whenever we shared our adoption experience, we tended to be ripped to shreds because of certain assumptions about who we are (as adopted people), who we should be, and what we should believe when it comes to adoption. The symposium will flip adoption upside down; it will consist of a lecture series given by some of our colleagues, allies, and alliances and we include you in this mix of amazing people. Some of the topics we will cover are the history of adoption, investigational research led by one of our overseas partners who has helped mothers in India and Ethiopia throughout the years to find their children sent overseas to the west. We also plan for panel discussions on the aftermath of adoption which will include grief and suicide —topics that adoption agencies refuse to acknowledge (since it would cut into their profit margins). We would like the audience to be filled with warm receptive friendly faces, such as yours. The auditorium is an intimate space and fits about 200 people. We will end on a happy note and hope you will consider joining us. My sister and I will be celebrating our 50th birthday that evening. We'd love to see you at this event at [AgainstChildTraffickingUSA.org](https://AgainstChildTraffickingUSA.org), so we can make this happen together.

My sister and I truly believe that all of us together will change the dominant face of adoption in the effort to protect local and global families (and unsuspecting mothers) from being traumatized by permanent and unnecessary separations.

Janine (Myung Ja) Vance  
The Search for Mother Missing  
Compiler of Adoption History 101: An Orphan's Research



ADOPTION TRAFFICKING AWARENESS SYMPOSIUM  
SUMMER 2022 | WASHINGTON STATE, USA

# Follow up from the Session 'The Adoption Closet: The Impact of Secrets on Families'

By: Amy Barker D'Alessandro, LMHC

If you attended this session at the retreat, you learned that according to a recent study at Columbia University, at any given time the average person is keeping up to 13 secrets, 5 of which they've never told anyone. And as we know all too well at CUB, adoption was founded upon secrecy which has had an enormous and devastating impact on each member of the family as well as on our society at large. People keep secrets for a variety of reasons, but the biggest motivators are shame and fear. Keeping secrets, which is different from healthy privacy, negatively affects one's overall mental, emotional, and physical health and relationship to self and others.



## Healing from Harmful Secrets

**ADDRESS THE TRAUMA**  
Work through the trauma with an informed professional.  
Grieve what has been lost to secret-keeping.

**CREATE RITUALS**  
To facilitate integration and acceptance of losses.

**HEALTHY BOUNDARIES**  
Determine how privacy is important.

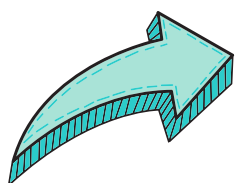
**TRANSPARENCY**  
Expose what's been hidden, but be careful not to retraumatize. Support searches and contact.

**SUPPORT**  
Connect with others who understand.

**ADVOCACY**  
Channel energy into empowerment.

Because secrets are so prevalent and potentially so harmful, we all need reminders to unburden ourselves from any that we are holding. We started this process together of healing from our harmful secret keeping at the retreat and in way of follow up, we wanted to remind you to follow the steps outlined here for healing and better health. Don't forget to practice ever important self care, especially during the holiday season when grief may be triggered more frequently. And for more information on the history of secrecy in adoption, read the highly recommended books below. It's time to come out of the Adoption Closet and make harmful secrets a thing of the past!

Read these!





# The reviews are in...

Thank you to everyone who filled out our evaluation survey from the retreat. More than half of you did so, and we deeply appreciated your time and effort giving us feedback. We learned a lot about how you felt at the retreat and what you need and want at future retreats. For example, we heard you loud and clear that the hospitality suite was too small so we'll be looking to fix things like that in 2022! But the overall sentiment was positive and can be felt through your individual comments...here are some of your words:

*"Loved being with other birth moms like me along with hearing and understanding those adopted and adoptive parents ♥."*

*"As an adoptee, meeting and talking with first moms individually."*

*"Adoptees and mothers together and hearing each other. This is needed from much needed healing on both sides. Long time grief is finally being healed by hearing each other."*

*"This was the 5th retreat I've attended & I was struck by how different & refreshing the panels & speakers were."*

*"Just spending time with people who get it."*  
*"The education I got with birth moms like my wife and the thing that really opened my eyes was what the adoptees go through."*



*"[my favorite part was] shared connections and learning"*

## FIRST TIME ATTENDEE

"For far too many years, I remained alone as a birth mother. I built a wall to protect my vulnerable heart from the conflicting messages that claimed I was 'brave and selfless' while vilifying my very existence as a woman who 'just gave her baby way.' I believed my grief, shame, and guilt were unique. But I am not alone. What I discovered at the 2021 CUB Annual Retreat - my first ever in-person birth mother event - was compassion and acceptance from a group of birth parents, adoptees, and adoptive parents whose integrity and support I will never go without again." ~ Candace Cahill, Denali National Park, Alaska

**43%** of attendees were first time attendees!

## FIRST TIME ATTENDEE

"The retreat can best be described as full of compassion and determination. A validation that having a united front is the only way forward to create the change necessary to keep families of origin together. From the panel discussions on literature given by my friends, The Vance Twins, successful OBC policy change in CT by Desiree Stephens, and the screening of @ghostkingdom with the charismatic Brian Stanton, this is a landmark event that has given me a booster shot of hope that the world we all envision for the future of adoption and families is possible." ~ Moses Farrow, [TransformAdoption.com](https://www.TransformAdoption.com)

## Coming Up...

### National Online Support Group

January 22, 2022  
 1-4 PM PST /  
 4-7 PM EST  
 More coming soon!

### 2022 Elections

We'll be making a call for candidates soon so we hope you'll consider joining our Board

### CUB Communicator Submissions

Have a story, poem, artwork or an idea for an article for us?  
 email us at  
[editor@cubirthparents.org](mailto:editor@cubirthparents.org)