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Editor's note

From Sue Kingham

Welcome to the second issue of the Adoption Option Trust (AOT) newsletter.

What great summer weather we have had! It was lovely to have a break over Christmas to recharge my batteries. I hope you have had a rest too.

2008 is a big year for the AOT. I hope you enjoy reading about our plans and our news.

DVD Distribution



Following the development of educational packs for GPs, youth workers, pregnancy counsellors

and others working with pregnant young women, the trustees have decided to begin distribution in east Christchurch. This is to be a pilot study and we are hoping to secure funding to contract a youth worker to assist us.

A public meeting at Waipuna Trust on Tuesday 13th May at 6pm will mark the beginning of the distribution. If you would like to know more about this meeting, or wish to be invited, please send the AOT an email info@adoptionoption.org.nz

We Welcome Two New Trustees

The first Board of Trustees meeting for 2008 was held on 25th January. Sue Kingham was delighted to welcome two new Trustees to the Board. **Janine Holland and Maria Pasene** have both been involved with the AOT for some time and are wonderful additions to the Board.

Janine Holland

Janine, a public relations consultant and mother of two boys joined the Adoption Option

Trust last year. She was instrumental in the success of the media campaign at the launch in June. Since then Janine has written articles for newspapers and magazines about the work of the AOT. Asked why she supports the trust she said:

"Despite being an adoptee, I never realised how little I knew about adoption today. I am amazed at how radically adoption has changed since I was placed for adoption in 1971.



Janine

I'm delighted that openness and honesty is now part of the equation when a child is adopted and I firmly believe that adoption offers a positive option for some families. My aim is to increase public awareness of how open adoption works and how it benefits child, mother and the wider family circles."

Maria Pasene

Maria's help was invaluable with the launch of the AOT. As a Health Promoter, Maria has a wealth of experience in working with youth and health professionals.

Maria and her husband, Keith,

have an adopted son, Kalani, aged two. When asked why she agreed to join the Board she said:

"Part of my reason for becoming a Board member for the AOT lies with the pure joy my husband Keith and I have experienced as adoptive parents to our beautiful son Kalani. When I look into his face, so close I can count the freckles, I feel overwhelmed with love and I would love others to have this opportunity. Another reason is I would like to encourage others to consider adoption as a viable choice when faced with a crisis pregnancy."



Maria with Keith and Kalani



"Juno" was released in New Zealand in January. With its theme of adoption the trustees were keen to find out how the story would be handled. "Juno" is a funny and positive film but the adoption system in the USA is very different from that in New Zealand. The adoptive parents were chosen from the classified adverts in the local paper and they turn out not to be all that they promised. Despite the fact that a closed adoption is chosen in the film the trustees decided it was a good opportunity to generate some publicity for the AOT.

Janine Holland went to work and managed to get a slot on TV3's "Nightline". Mary Ellen Whittington, a birth mum from Auckland, who had not previously shared her story in the media, was brave enough to be interviewed and did a fantastic job of highlighting the benefits of openness in adoption. Mary Ellen had this to say about the interview, *"Looking back I realise that being interviewed for NightLine was challenging, as it was not only my first time in front of a TV camera but also my first time speaking publicly as a birth mother. I now realise that it is no longer about myself, or my story, but about the bigger picture. So I feel incredibly privileged that I was given that opportunity and have grown immensely because of it."*

Articles in the Media

Since the last newsletter the AOT has had articles linked to the film "Juno" in the following newspapers:

The Press (Perspectives section)

The Ashburton Guardian

Nelson Mail

Marlborough Express

The press release was sent to 24 daily newspapers from Northland to Southland.

The trustees also decided to place an advert and submit a story to "Tearaway" Magazine. 149,000 people over the age of 10 years old read "Tearaway". The majority of readers are 13-19 years of age. The magazine is featuring the film "Juno" in its March edition and the AOT tied

in with this by offering them a birth mum's story. Mary Ellen Whittington did a wonderful job of telling her story in an engaging way that younger readers will relate well to. If you would like to read this story you can pick up a copy of "Tearaway" at a video store or in a high school. Alternatively you can read it on line at our home page:

www.adoptionoption.org.nz



Volunteer Positions available:

Researching and collating addresses of youth groups and schools in your area

Volunteer coordinator for your area

If you have links with the health or education sectors there are positions available for DVD distributors.

Please email us for details.

AOT supporter, Michelle Good and her family have had a busy time of late. Not only has her husband, Tim, decided to return to full time study, they have also just moved house. Despite all the changes Michelle and the family have found time to make up AOT packs with DVDs, leaflets and posters for the Christchurch distribution. *"We love helping the AOT and this is something we can do in the evening in front of the telly," said Michelle.*

Thanks for your hard work guys!



Garage Sale

The trustees have collected a large number of items for a garage or car boot sale in Christchurch. Would anyone be willing to organise this in the next couple of months for us? Please email us at info@adoptionoption.org.nz If you live in Christchurch and have items you would like to donate to the sale please email the above address with details of the items and your contact phone number and, if we get a co-coordinator, he or she will be in touch.





Adoption Option Trust
PO Box 13434 Christchurch

E-Mail:
info@adoptionoption.org.nz

We're on the Web!
www.adoptionoption.org.nz

Educating about adoption in New Zealand today

Do you know someone who maybe interested in receiving this newsletter? We would be delighted if you would consider forwarding the newsletter link to a few friends.

If they want to receive future copies they can email the secretary secretary@adoptionoption.org.nz to get on the emailing address list.

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter please email the secretary and she will remove you from the mailing list.

News from the AOT Board

At the first Board meeting of 2008 the trustees worked on a **Five Year Vision**. We came up with the following:

- All women facing a crisis pregnancy will receive information about adoption.
- All professionals working with young pregnant women will have information about adoption.

- Public awareness will be high across New Zealand of adoption as a positive option in a crisis pregnancy.
- Adoption will be an option included in the Health Curriculum in New Zealand high schools.

The Board also decided the next areas for DVD distribution would be the rest of Christchurch followed by Ashburton.

Mission Statement

To promote adoption as a positive choice for people facing a crisis pregnancy and to educate the public and professionals working with youth in New Zealand about current domestic adoption practice.

Website Traffic

Simon Kingham continues to update the website. He has put items about "Juno" and some new birth mum stories on in the last few months. He welcomes comments and ideas. Contact him via info@adoptionoption.org.nz Here are the hits the site has received since December:

December 406

January 462

February 477

Traffic did increase when the "Perspectives" item was in the Press. The "Juno" item on the home page has been opened 30 times and the number of people viewing information for pregnant women has been increasing each month.

Corporate Supporters

Spooce Media www.spooce.co.nz

Pakworld www.pakworld.co.nz

Discount Domains

www.discountdomains.co.nz

Digiweb NZ Ltd www.digiweb.co.nz

Cabbage Tree Creative

www.cabbagetree.co.nz

Treasurer's Report

In our last newsletter we mentioned how we set up an Annual Supporters Membership, running from 1 Jan-31 Dec at the cost of \$20.00 per annum. For this, members receive a special member's edition of the quarterly newsletter. **To date we have 3 members!**

We would love to increase this number. If you would like to join please see the "How to Support Us" section on the website. Once you have paid please email me on treasurer@adoptionoption.org.nz stating you have paid to become a supporter and giving your address. I will log your email address for the supporter's newsletter and send you out a tax-deductible receipt.

Funding

We are hoping to apply for funding to pay for the DVD packs for areas outside of Christchurch. If you have connections to funding bodies, or can recommend places to apply to, please do contact me.