# *ADOPTION IS PERSONAL…*

## Adoption ARC Keeps it That Way!

*You have a choice and there are so many crucial differences. What is the most personal thing that you will ever do? Trust an agency to assist you with bringing your baby home to you.*

# *Adoption* ARC

*Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware Licensed*

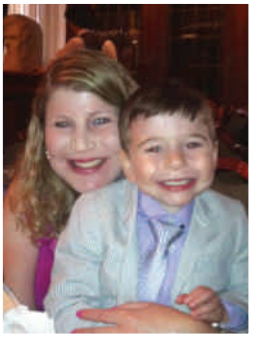
## FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Tara E. Gutterman, Esquire, is Adoption ARC's Founder and Executive Director.

She began her career as an attorney with the City of Philadelphia Law Department, where she handled hundreds of chid abuse and neglect cases. She also handled many termination-of-parental-rights hearings. Later, she worked for a private, non-profit agency in Philadelphia, encountering the range of issues she now confronts at Adoption ARC, while specializing in termination-of-parental-rights hearings and adoption finalizations.

Ms Gutterman is a member of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys, the Pennsylvania Bar Association, and the Philadelphia Bar Association. She is a 1988 graduate of Bryn Mawr College and a 1991 graduate of Temple University School of Law, and she is licensed to practice law in both Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



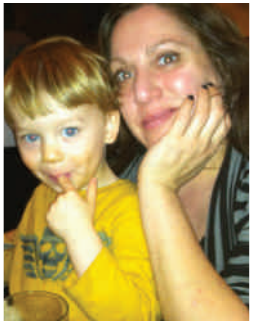
Merle is Adoption is ARC's Executive Director. She has worked informally with Adoption ARC since its inception in March 1994. Merle even designed the first Adoption ARC brochures and continues to help design the newsletters and other marketing materials. Merle received her Master of Education degree in Counseling Psychology in 2007 from Temple University and her Master of Science degree in Technical and Science Communication from Drexel University in 1996.

For more than eight years, Merle worked in the technical communication field. She began her career as a junior level technical writer and worked her way up to a senior level technical writer where she supervised a team of writers. Merle also taught college level writing/composition classes at National University, a nontraditional college for working adults in Southern California.

In 2005, Merle returned to graduate school for Counseling Psychology. Merle interned at Calcutta House, a residential facility in North Philadelphia for people who are homeless and have HIV. Merle provided one-on-one and group counseling to the residents. She also helped organize events for the residents. In 2007, Merle worked for a social service agency in Manhattan called Project Renewal. She provided vocational counseling for people with severe mental health disorders. In September 2008, Merle began working full-time for Adoption ARC as a birth parent counselor and administrative supervisor. While at Adoption ARC, she was able to combine her counseling and administrative skills together to grow with the agency. In 2009, Merle took over as the agency's Executive Director devoting much time and energy to staff development and training as well and tightening policy and procedure.

Merle is a member of the American Counseling Association. She has volunteered her time with various nonprofit organizatons in Philadelphia, New York and San Diego. She looks forward to continuing the good work and high level of qualiy service that Adoption ARC has provided to all of its clients for the past 18 years.

## SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISOR



Laura brings over 22 years of clinical and administrative social work experience to Adoption ARC. She began working with Adoption ARC in August 2009. Laura received her Master of Social Work degree from Temple University in 1994. She received her license and clinical license shortly thereafter.

Laura brings her vast experiences working with children and youth to Adoption ARC. She spent several years working in Washington, DC as a social worker and a social work supervisor in the public child welfare system.

She also worked in the managed behavioral health care industry as a supervisor and a clinical program manager, providing clinical supervision and administrative oversight to a large team of clinicians.

Laura continues to run her own small private practice where she provides psychotherapy to adults. She also provides clinical supervision to newly graduated master level social workers seeking to obtain their clinical license.

Laura's creative energy, strong work ethic and comprehensive knowledge base pertaining to social services will continue to offer Adoption ARC leadership and excellence in the field of private adoption.

Laura is a proud adoptive mother of a three and a half year old son, Benji through Adoption ARC.

## *Adoption* ARC POLICIES

***WE BELIEVE IN THE SANCTITY OF THE ADOPTION TRIAD:***

### YOU, THE CHILD AND THE BIRTH PARENT

A healthy child will know that his or her birth parent is treated with respect and that you as the adoptive parent chose to work to ensure that you chose to work with an agency to provide this respect.

ARC Birth Counselors meet face-to-face with every birth parent whom we serve. ARC provides individual counseling before, during and after the adoption placement. ARC provides 24/7 Availability for Birth Parents Emergencies including Labor and Delivery Support . Support Groups for Birth Parents

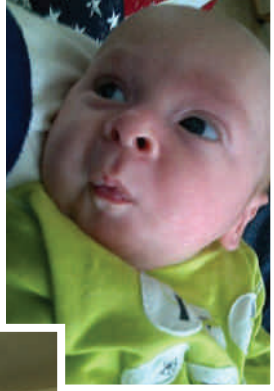
ARC coordinates the contact between you and the birth parents via photos and letters and open meetings.

Counseling and Referrals to the Adoptive Parents continues forever *(Throughout your child's life and different developmental stages)*

You can always turn to ARC's social work team for advice and assistance

***ARC HAS NEVER HAD A DUTCH FAMILY "AGE OUT"***

We are very firm about ethically taking on only those clients whom we believe that we can serve in a reasonable amount of time.



Adoption ARC

## HAGUE PROCESS

***What happens after the birth of the baby and the legal paperwork is signed:***

Upon receipt of a match, the sending agency in the US (Adoption ARC) must compose a social summary and attach legal documentation as well as a photo of the baby, fee disclosure and send it via A New Way to the Dutch Ministry. Oral approval is usually given in 5-10 business days.

After the approval is given, the Ministry issues an Article 17 letter , which is attached to the Hague Petition. The Hague Petition must be filed in state Court in the United States and a hearing will ensue in which testimony is taken. The Court will order findings of facts which state that the adoption is in compliance with the Hague Treaty.

After the Court order is issued, the adoptive family may take custody of their child. The Hague Order will also mandate the US Passport Agency to issue a US Passport in the name that the adoptive family has give to the child.

Adoption ARC will open up a case with the ATS to track outgoing adoptions with the US State Department.

After the final adoption order is issued, the attorney will send paperwork including the final order for the issuance of the Hague Adoption Order.

Upon arrival in the US, the adoptive family will meet with the agency and attorney for placement to sign all placement documents. The baby will be placed with the family . Then, the family and baby will remain in the state of the child's birth until the court order is received granting permission for the family to go to the US Passport Office at 200 Chestnut Street in Philadelphia to get a passport in the proposed adoptive family's name.

While waiting for the court order, the family shall have passport photos taken of the baby. You will also have your first post placement visit arranged by Adoption ARC in your temporary residence. You may also wish or need a doctor's visit. We would suggest using the practice. Society Hill Pediatrics (215-545-8188). If you have an emergency, you should take your child to Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (215-590-1000) which has an emergency room.

Once the court order is received (Usually 1-2 weeks or less from placement), Tara Gutterman, Esquire will make an appointment to accompany you to the passport office to obtain your child's passport. You will need to bring with you:

1. The baby
2. Baby's passport Photos
3. Your Passports
4. Flight Itinerary showing the baby's return date. (It must be within 2 weeks of the passport appointment.)
5. Your passports as identification
6. You will be given a time (on that day) to return to pick up the passport.
   You will receive a temporary passport good for one year. After you make the adoption final (via video) you may go to the US Embassy with the new birth certificate and adoption judgment to extend the passport for 5 years.
7. You may travel home at this time.
8. You may need an apostille on the court order giving you guardianship. Tara Gutterman, Esquire will arrange this for you.

While at home, you will have the Ministry follow the post placement outline and submit the reports to us when officially translated. At the end of the process, your agency will work on a final report with Adoption ARC social work supervisor, Laura Hoffman,LCSW (laurazie@hotmail.com). Once that is completed and all baby's medical reports are in and your certificates of good conduct have been updated, you will be ready to make your adoption final via video conference.

For the video hearing, you will be contacted by the Court Liaison,Cathy Cuthbert , when they are ready to list your case and you will arrange a "trial video test" prior to the hearing.

At the final hearing, your attorney will be at the court with the Judge and Judge's staff. You will see her via video and she will ask you questions. At the end, the Judge will grant the adoption. Your official judgment and new birth certificate will be sent at the later date.

Once the adoption is made final and you have received the final order and amended birth certificate, you may go to the US Embassy to extend your child's passport for five years.

Soon, you will begin to tell your child his or her adoption story. Remember to tell him or her that your love was so strong that you traveled across a continent to become his/her parent.

# Adoption ARC

## ADOPTION FACTS

### *Two Kinds of Matches… Intended and Last Minute*

Because ARC is a licensed agency with an excellent reputation in our states of license, we often get calls from hospitals of birth mother who have just delivered a baby and want to make a plan "last minute". These birth mothers receive all of the ARC services, just on an emergency basis.

Pre-Birth Matches: Many birth families require some financial support during the pregnancy. In this scenario, you may be matched before birth and have on-going contact through the pregnancy.

### *What happens if the Birth Parents do not follow through with the match?*

ARC is aware of other service providers that demand the full adoption fee to be paid prior to the birth and all money is lost if the placement does not occur. This may happen one to two times before a successful placement with the other service provider.

***DO NOT BE FOOLED! GET THE FACTS ABOUT WHAT YOUR REAL COSTS ARE!***

You do not pay for a service which ARC has not performed. ARC does not bill for a full placement fee before the placement occurs.

You only will re-pay a counseling fee (5000) as ARC is a strict fee- for-service agency.

### *Get the facts about what your actual costs are:*

ALL ARC fees are disclosed up-front. With other service providers, there is no way to know how much the other non Hague attorneys, social workers and agencies will charge for their services. This is a cost passed onto you but not disclosed up-front.

***Adoption ARC families who adopt a second time come back to ARC almost 100% of the time!***

**Mitchell is Holland's first American and Adoption ARC's first Dutch adoptee aside from being handsome and a Phillies fan**

## DUTCH ADOPTIONS

### *ARC has a Dutch Adoptive Parent on the Board and has done so since 2007.*

ARC values our Dutch clients and we need you to have input directly into our process.

Our Board helps to oversee our agency and we have an accountant, a medical professional, former birth parent counselor and two adoptive parents to guide us.

### *Be Part of the Largest Adoptive Parent Support Group in the Netherlands*

Board Member and Adoptive Parent Ed ManteL Hosts the ARC Computer Forum for all ARC families And hosts the yearly ARC Reunion

ARC has lobbied with various Dutch MP's in Order to keep American Adoptions a viable and ethical option for the Dutch

The Adoption ARC Work Group worked tirelessly in 2009 meetings with the Ministry and MPs to ensure that adoption would continue to the US

### *ARC has a lot of FIRSTS in the Netherlands*

- Placed the first United States child with a Dutch family in 1996
- The Founder/Attorney devised the Legal Steps for Outgoing US Adoptions which is still used in the Intercountry Adoption ARC, the United States portion of the Hague Treaty on International Adoption
- Adoption ARC placed the first US baby with a same sex Dutch couple in the Netherlands
- Placed with Dutch Celebrities in 2001, 2002 and 2008

*Adoption* **ARC** is a a nonprofit agency ensure that all profits go back into the agency to assist with the needs of birth parents and children. To date, ARC has placed about 125 infants into the Netherlands and NEVER had a disrupted placement.

With a nonprofit Hague Accredited Agency- You know that you are working with Adoption ARC. Adoption ARC does not work with other non-Accredited attorneys, agencies or facilitators to make an adoption match. In many cases, when you do not work with a Hague Accredited Agency, you will HAVE NO IDEA with whom you are working. This can be scary and potentially UNETHICAL. For example, A Hague licensed attorney can work with unaccredited bodies.

ARC counselors work directly with the birth families pre-post and during the adoption placement. Tara Gutterman,Esquire does all your legal work directly.

## *Call Us Anytime…*

You can call ARC and Tara Gutterman or email us and you will get a response within 24 hours. We welcome your calls and we ENJOY working with adoptive families directly. YOU WILL GET TO KNOW US AND WE WILL GET TO KNOW YOU. This is why we have had such success in matching our adoptive families.

*Adoption* **ARC**

*Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware Licensed*

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