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## **Narrative Description of Activities of Child Adoption Organization**

### **Overview**

The Moonlight Foundation is a brand new non-profit corporation that was incorporated to address the fact that adoption of newborns in the US is a costly and complex process that is poorly understood by much of the general public. As a result, choosing to offer a baby up for adoption is often not considered a viable option by women who become unexpectantly pregnant, and adopting a newborn is often not considered viable by prospective parents looking to create or grow a loving family. One of our founders (Owain) has been through the adoption process successfully twice (after several aborted efforts) and this organization is created to share his learnings and offer support to others who might face similar barriers. Owain and his partner were able to navigate the process due with hard work, education and a relative financial advantage – we know that not all others have the same advantages and may, in the same circumstances, fail.

### **Owain found that there are four main barriers to newborn adoption**

1. Lack of process education (knowing how to get started and what to do)
2. Social stigma attached to giving up a baby for adoption
3. Meeting the associated costs
4. Being turned down due to religious and other affiliations

**Lack of Education:** creating an adoption plan and navigating the social and legal necessities: Knowing how to get the process started is confusing for both adoptive parents and birth mothers. Adoption laws vary by state, making the process of finding a match and then successfully completing an adoption difficult for the non-expert to understand.

**Perception of Social Stigma:** As the teenage pregnancy rate has fallen and the stigma attached to single motherhood has faded, the number of babies placed for adoption has declined. In 1971,

90,000 children were placed. By 1975 the number had fallen by half, mainly because of the legalization of abortion in 1973. In 2014, only 18,000 infants under the age of two were placed for adoption.<sup>1</sup> Significant stigma is still attached to a mother's decision to carry a baby to term and make an adoption plan for the child.

**Religious and other affiliations:** An increasing number of states are considering whether state-funded agencies should be allowed, for religious reasons, to turn down prospective parents. This disproportionately impacts non-Christian, gay and unmarried prospective parents.

**Costs:** It is much cheaper to terminate a pregnancy than to adopt a child. We aim to eliminate the costs associated with adoption so that more women are free to choose adoption as a viable path, and more prospective parents are able to participate.

We plan to help birth mothers and parents navigate these four barriers by:

- Having no religious preference or affiliation ourselves – everyone is welcome
- Providing both birth mothers and adoptive parent with process education and live guidance. Connecting them to others who have successfully navigated this adoption process
- Helping defray some of the adoption costs
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As a brand-new organization, we plan to build our services exclusively through volunteer work, delivering educational and financial resources to those in need. We intend to achieve 501(c)(3) status, though for the sake of clarity, we have not yet done so.

## **Precedence**

### **Comparable Groups**

Many existing groups exclude whole categories of prospective parents for religious reasons, or focus on agency adoptions by tax exempt agencies. The following is a representative list of other granting non-profits in the space.

#### Fund Your Adoption

Crowdsourced fundraising. Great way to tap into family and friends. Does not help guide through the process or address the needs of birthmothers. Requires parents to tap family and friends for themselves, which some are reluctant to do. Requires time and expertise to run your own fundraising campaign while also running your adoption.

#### Help US Adopt

Support international and foster adoptions as well as domestic. Cap grants at \$15,000. Stricter eligibility criteria. Restrictions on what they pay for. Does not help guide through the process or address the needs of birthmothers.

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<sup>1</sup> The Economist, June 24<sup>th</sup> 2017

## God's Grace Adoption Ministry

Matching grants. Only Christian, heterosexual two parent families are eligible.  
This is an example of many such organizations with similar eligibility requirements.

## National Adoption Foundation

Support international and foster adoptions as well as domestic. Otherwise has similar programs.  
Message is much more parent-centric than mother-centric.

## Gift of Adoption

Focused on keeping children out of the foster system and keeping siblings together.

## **Vision, Mission and Values**

Our vision is to help create world in which no achieve this, our mission is to give a pregnant women a genuine choice to choose adoption by removing the financial, logistical and social (religious, sexual orientation, financial, stigmas, other) barriers that stand in the way.

**The values that we will operate by are:** Integrity, Empowerment, Diversity, Community, Empathy

## **Providing Free Match-making Services**

Owain's experience of finding a birthmother with whom to develop a relationship and ultimately make an adoption plan (called "making a match" or "matching" in adoption circles) was unusually fast (one week and two months for each of his successful adoptions). He achieved this by using google ad-words to target people searching the internet for information about making an adoption plan and driving traffic to his and his husband's personal adoption website where prospective birthmothers could learn about them and contact them.

Like many other things that used to operate on an "agency" model, the proliferation of the internet has radically changed the way birthmothers are able to find hopeful adoptive parents. Much to his surprise, Owain found in conversations with many adoptive parents, that not a single other parent had used google ad-words to find their own matches. He attributes this to 2 factors. First, setting up and managing a google ad-words campaign is technically and conceptually complex, requiring significant specialized expertise that the vast majority of people lack. Secondly, the budget required is substantial (Owain set a budget of \$800 per month).

We can solve both of those problems by running ad-words campaigns on behalf of the parent we are helping, as well as providing technical assistance with setting up and running their own personal adoption websites.

## **Educating Birthmothers**

Education, counseling and financial aid - We can give them the information they need to determine if adoption is the best choice for them, with no hidden agenda tied to religious or political views. Should a birthmother choose adoption, we can then help her to find the resources she will need to create a successful adoption plan.

Adoption laws vary by state, making the process of finding a match and then successfully completing an adoption difficult for the non-expert to understand.

For example, an increasing number of states are considering whether state-funded agencies should be allowed, for religious reasons, to turn down prospective parents. This disproportionately impacts non-Christian, gay and unmarried prospective parents. We believe that the barriers to adoption should be brought down for all, not built up.

We will, for example, help a birthmother navigate the complex state laws and overcome the social stigma attached to adoption.

### **Educating Adoptive Parents**

Education, counseling and financial aid - We can give adoptive parents the information they need to determine if adoption is the best choice for them, with no hidden agenda tied to religious or political views. Should they choose adoption, we can then help prospective parents find the resources they need to create a successful adoption plan.

We will similarly educate adoptive parents to help them find birthmothers considering adoption and to practical ways to navigate both complex state laws (we will NOT be providing legal advice).

### **Financial Aid Program**

Eligibility:

- a) Be a prospective adoptive parent(s) or an expectant mother committed to making an adoption plan
- b) For parents, must be resident in the US and they must be legally allowed to pursue an adoption.
- c) Adoptions must be of a newborn, by agency or private adoption
- d) No preference or exclusion will be made on basis of race, religion, sex, sexuality, or other protected class. If you are legally allowed to pursue an adoption and have financial need, we would like to help.

Aid is proposed to be available for expenses related to making and successfully completing an adoption plan. Specifically,

- a) Costs associated with legal fees, agency fees, social worker fees (for home-study, visits, counseling or other support related to the planned adoption).

- b) Costs associated with finding and establishing a match between birthmother and prospective adoptive parent(s), for example the establishment of a website, email address, telephone number and advertising expenses.
- c) Costs associated with pregnancy for birthmother's health and wellbeing, for example clothing, medical care, housing aid, etc. Expenses would be strictly limited to those permitted by law, in general following an agreed budget established by the agency or lawyers representing the birthmother and prospective adopted parents.
- d) Costs associated with travel and lodging to attend the birth and take custody of the child and to remain in state while ICPC clearance is obtained (in the case of out of state adoptions).

### **Educating Volunteers**

At times, per the discretion of the board of directors, we may provide internships or volunteer opportunities which will provide opportunities for involvement in outreach activities and programs in order to have a greater impact for change. One of the activities that volunteers may be involved in is basic education on topics such as adoption choices in your state, finding the right lawyer, or talking to birthmothers. We may also seek volunteers to run fundraising events, prepare promotional materials or share their own adoption stories. Such activities shall always be free of charge to participants and will not include compensation to the volunteers.

### **Logistical Aid**

We plan to provide educational materials to help participants to understand the adoption process, create peer resources for support, forums where participants can share experiences through digital media (e.g. Websites, social media, etc.) and directories of third parties who may be able to provide support.