LFCS growing hope
Lutheran Family and Children's Services of Missouri

February 2014

The Child Welfare Program at Lutheran Family and Children's Services (LFCS) offers the following information to help you understand the steps involved in the release of adoption record information.

LFCS has been an adoption agency for many years and is able to assist in searches on adoptions accomplished in Missouri. For the last several years, LFCS has also had the records of Provident Counseling, previously known as Family and Children's Services, and also provides post-adoption services for those clients.

Information concerning any adoption finalized in Missouri is protected by state law. The law that governs adoption changed on August 28, 2011 to no longer require the consent of the adoptive parents. A request for information must be in writing, contain verification of your identity and should specify whether you are seeking non-identifying and/or identifying information. (You may use the attached request letter.) Persons requesting information must be 18 years of age and must have a direct relationship to the adoption. Any request for information should include as much of the following information as is known:

1. Name of person requesting information
2. Address of person requesting information
3. Social Security Number
4. Date of Birth
5. Phone Number
6. Birth name of child
7. Date court issued adoption decree or termination order
8. Cause or File Number and name of court from adoption decree or termination order
9. Name(s) of adoptive parent(s)

Non-identifying information can be released to an adult adoptee or an adoptive parent upon their written request to the agency or the court. The fee at LFCS is **$150.00.** Your payment should be submitted with your letter of request in the form of a personal check, cashier's check or money-order payable to Lutheran Family and Children's Services of Missouri.

Requests for identifying information should also be sent to the court that finalized the adoption. The consent of the birth parent is necessary to the release of identifying information. In most situations this requires that the agency research, or "search," for current information on the birth parent. Our fee for the first 10 hours of searching is **$450.00** and $65.00 for each additional hour. We will also request reimbursement for any out-of-pocket expenses that may be incurred in the process of searching, i.e. fees for legal documents, postage and professional database services. Most searches can be completed within the initial 10 hours. You will be contacted for your approval if additional time is necessary to complete the search.

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401 West Boulevard North
Columbia, Missouri 65203
Phone 573-815-9955
Fax 573-449-4640

Southeast Missouri Office
3178 Blattner Drive
Cape Girardeau, Missouri 63703
Phone 573-334-5866
Fax 573-334-7593

Southwest Missouri Office
2130 N. Glenstone
Springfield, Missouri 65803
Phone 417-862-1972
Fax 417-862-3276

St. Louis Office
8631 Delmar Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri 63124
Phone 314-787-5100
Fax 314-534-1588

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We have found that a **non-identifying letter** written by you to explain, in your own words, your motivation and expectations from the contact will be helpful in making the initial contact with your birth family. The letter need not be lengthy but must be non-identifying—no names, dates, or names of places can be included. You may, however, include information about yourself, your adoption, your current family and a list of questions that you would like answered, regardless of their decision about the release of their identifying information. You may include questions about medical history, as well as questions about nationality and family background. Some of this information may be included in the summary of non-identifying information. However in most situations, the medical information from the record is not current and only your birth parents can provide updated information. If you have specific medical concerns and questions, please include them in your letter.

Information on Siblings may also be requested. The court will need to authorize the agency (i.e., LFCS) to begin the process. Information can only be released if that sibling gives a signed, notarized consent.

Please find enclosed a list of books **written on adoption search and reunion**. We can never guarantee the outcome of a search or contact and so it is important to prepare yourself, as much as possible, for whatever the outcome of your search might be. It is an emotional journey and the more you understand about the possibilities the easier it will be to experience the journey. These books can be found at your local bookstore, library, or online.

We are also including a **Missouri Adoption Registry** form in case you have not already entered your name in this free registry. If your birth parent is also registered the registry will contact you, your birth parent, the court and the agency to advise that a match has been made and they will then facilitate the reunion.

You may **make payment** for services with a personal check, cashier's check or a money order payable to Lutheran Family and Children's Services of Missouri. We cannot begin a search until authorization from the court and the fee have been received. If the fee is a problem, please contact me at 314-787-5100, to discuss payment options.

If you have any questions about the search process, please contact me.

Sincerely,

LFCS Adoption Search Team