Options for Adoption

Your gift...Your plan...We will help you...

Receive the gift of life

Give the gift of life
Options for Adoption

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INTRODUCTION

You are a very special person; you have chosen life for your child. This is a courageous, loving and life giving decision. Even though this is not a problem free decision, you will realize the goodness of this decision and so will your child.

You may decide to explore adoption. In one sense this is a sad decision because this means that you believe circumstances in your life are such that you cannot parent your child yourself. We want to help you examine these circumstances. Perhaps with the right kind of help you can change the circumstances and be able to parent the child yourself. In the event parenting in not a path you choose, we'll work together under your leadership as you design the best plan for your child; namely, a well thought out and cooperative adoption.

Adoption is a major decision. We would like you to be well informed as you think about adoption. This booklet is intended to be an aid to you as you attempt to understand and evaluate this particular option. Your worker will go over many details with you personally. Be sure to ask questions about anything that is confusing you.

ABOUT OUR AGENCY

Catholic Charities is a multi-service, licensed child welfare agency. We are sponsored by the Catholic Church and are committed to basic human values. Besides our services to expectant parents and adoptive families, Catholic Charities provides, Marriage and Family Counseling, Natural Family Planning, Refugee Resettlement, Bilingual Outreach Program, Ombudsman Program and Rural Life Program in the 11 counties of Northern Illinois. Our offices offer services without discrimination based on race, creed or national origin.

Our Agency has been providing adoptive services for over 70 years. In that time adoption services have greatly changed.

We provide counseling for the expectant parent. We feel deeply for birthparents and their families experiencing an unplanned pregnancy and want to help them make the best decision for themselves and the child. We provide an adoption service for those expectant parents interested in this option.
A NOTE TO BIRTHFATHERS

If you're an expectant father and are reading this booklet, we salute you. You are obviously interested in your child's future and that concern is very much to your credit.

The unfortunate reality is that many males are uninvolved in the pregnancies of their partners. No doubt there are many reasons. Sometimes it's fear, sometimes it's misunderstanding, and sometimes it's a sense of powerlessness. Whatever the reasons, the outcome leaves many women and children feeling unsupported and unvalued. Those uninvolved males also lose a tremendous opportunity personal growth.

It's difficult these days to be a responsible unmarried expectant father since no one knows what responsibility looks like given your circumstances. Twenty years ago, it was simple: a "good guy" married his partner. Over the years, however, we discovered marriage wasn't always a good idea and, as a result, society has withdrawn that script for responsible behavior. The trouble is that we haven't replaced it with a new description for responsible male behavior.

In order to help you clarify your responsibilities, we have listed a few suggestions.

TAKE INTEREST in your partner and the pregnancy. The movement toward a new life is a fascinating journey and your interest lets her know that she and the baby are important.

BECOME INFORMED about the experiences and issues at hand. If you take time to learn about what's going on, you will be better equipped to be helpful.

SUPPORT your partner. It is important to offer emotional support. It's being there to share the momentous ups and downs. It involves a listening ear and an understanding heart. Your partner may also need financial support at this time.

BE HONEST. Your partner needs to know where you stand. When you are honest with her, you help her to plan wisely. If you tell her only what you think she wants to hear, and not what you really feel, you may encourage false expectations.

REALIZE YOUR IMPORTANCE. Be involved in the planning process. Your input in the planning for your child is extremely important and valued. We hope the two of you will plan cooperatively.
A NOTE TO BIRTHMOTHERS ABOUT BIRTHFATHERS

On September 1, 1994, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services established a Putative Father Registry. The Putative Father Registry is designed as a process of notifying a putative (alleged) father when his child may be the subject of an adoption proceeding, both to protect the father's rights to assert his interest in the proceeding, and to protect those interested in adopting the child. By statutory definition, a putative father is someone who may be a child's biological father, but who does not have the legal status of a father because he was not married to the child's mother at the time of or prior to the birth, and has not had his paternity established through legal proceedings.

Any persons, who wish to register with the Putative Father Registry, must do so by completing and submitting the putative Father Registration Form, within 30 days of the child's birth. The forms must be signed by the alleged father, and returned to the Registry within the 30-day time frame. Catholic Charities will assist any person who is requesting to do so; all forms are available at our agency. Or you may contact the registry for more information and obtain the necessary forms at:

Illinois Putative Father Registration
10 W. 35th Street, Suite 9F7-1
Chicago, IL 60616
1-866-737-3237
www.putativefather.org

Since an Illinois Supreme Court decision in 1971, birthfathers have the same right as birthmothers to decide to parent the child or make a plan for adoption. If the birthfather is known and able to be contacted, he must agree with the plan for adoption.

Sometimes the birthmother wishes to protect the birthfather, or if he is given the choice he will choose to parent the child himself. The birthmother may also be afraid that her family will find out who the father of the child is. Perhaps the birthmother is afraid because the birthfather has been abusive to her in the past. These fears are certainly understandable. Because identifying, contacting and dealing with the birthfather can be very difficult, we are here to assist you with this task.

If the father is unknown, the birthmother must sign an affidavit stating that she does not know who the father is. Before a plan of adoption can be completed, the law requires a notice to be published in the newspaper inviting the father of the child to come to claim his rights. Failure to respond to this notice after 30 days allows the court to terminate his right as a parent without further notice.
DECISION MAKING

You are facing a monumental decision; one that you have probably never faced before and hopefully will never face again. There is no way to make the decision simple; no way anyone else can or should make it for you. A well-informed decision about your child's future is very important.

The following are suggestions about the decision making process:

**DON'T** put your head in the sand. You'll get nowhere by idly wishing the circumstances were different or trying to ignore it all. The dilemma is not going to go away. You must face the fact that a decision must be made by you.

**INVESTIGATE** all the possibilities. You want to gather all the information you can. Read about your options. Check with experts on the possibilities. Talk with people who have lived out the options. We will help to connect you to the resources you need.

**HONESTY** is important. Be honest with yourself about your feelings. Be honest with others involved.

**BALANCE** is desirable. A good decision considers both heart (feeling) and mind (intellect). Ask yourself at least these questions:

- What do I **feel** that I want to do?
- What do I **think** is the sensible thing to do?
- What do I **believe** is the right thing to do?

Other variables to balance are self-interest and appreciation for the impact of your decision on others. You will be offered many views of your plans. Listen to others to the degree they are affected by your decision. Those who are most affected by it deserve to be heard. You might seek the input of others who have been in your situation. Finally, if there is a wise person in your life, spend time with that person. Realize what works for one doesn't always work for another.

**ANTICIPATE** the long-range impact of each of your options. Peer into a crystal ball one year, three years, five years, ten years, fifteen years and twenty years down the road. What does the future hold for you and your child for each option? What's the best that the future might hold? Be realistic on the one hand and on the other don't abandon your dreams too quickly.

**REHEARSE** the decision in your mind. Set an artificial deadline and require yourself to answer. See how it feels and whether or not you can live with your decision.
The reality is going to be far more powerful than you anticipate. We've noticed that efforts to evaluate the options tend to be more intellectual before the birth of a child and more emotional after the child's arrival. Both styles are necessary and useful.

**RECORD** your thinking. Keep a journal. This will help you clarify your thinking and identify any concerns you may have. It may help you identify a trend in your feelings. Such a journal can make a fine gift to your child.

**ADOPTION IS NOT PERFECT:**

Before describing our adoption services there are a few points about adoption that are important for you to know.

Not all birthparents fare well after completing a plan for adoption. Some always feel guilty about their decision and stay angry at others (e.g., boyfriend, and parents) because they "had to go through" with the adoption. Some worry that the child will never forgive them for their decision. Of course, all birthparents remember their child, but some worry excessively about how their child is doing. Although most adopted children grow up in stable, healthy and loving homes, some adopted children seek counseling for emotional problems related to their adoption. Obviously these feelings may affect future aspects of their lives. This is why we feel counseling is very important.

We share this with you not to dissuade you from completing a plan for adoption, but to give you a realistic picture. We believe in adoption and consider it a positive and beautiful option for many birthparents faced with an unplanned pregnancy.

**ADOPTION SERVICES**

You have a right to feel good about your participation in the whole adoption process. You have a right to feel free to make the best decision for you and your child. We use no pressure tactics. There is never any obligation to the Agency or to any adoptive parent.

If you make the decision for adoption, we want it to be your decision. We will help arrange an open adoption situation. We encourage openness in adoption. Openness is an attitude, which says that adoption is a cooperative plan between the birthparents and adoptive parents for a child in which both have a vital interest. Openness recognizes that in adoption there are two sets of parents who are connected for life with a child they both love. Openness encourages both sets of parents to share information and expectations.
THE BASIC PREMISES OF OPENNESS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- Openness provides a healthy attitude in the adoption triangle.
- People are entitled to information which affects them.
- Open communication is usually more effective than indirect communication.
- The participants in the adoption triangle are, with rare exception, honest caring and decent people.
- The best interests of the adoptees will be better served through cooperative interaction between adoptive and birthparents.
- Individualized plans have more potential to meet the needs of those involved.

Advantages of Openness:

**Adoptee**
- First hand knowledge of background and birthparents.
- Positive feelings toward himself and his adoption.
- Since both sets of parents respect each other, the adoptee is free to care for them both.

**Adoptive Parents**
- The satisfaction of being chosen and a sense of entitlement.
- Ongoing, accurate, first-hand knowledge allows them to successfully answer questions.
- The opportunity to express gratitude to the birthparents.

**Birthparents**
- The satisfaction of being able to choose a loving family.
- Ability to communicate their love to the child.
- Ongoing reassurance of child's well being.
- Acknowledgement of the gift they have given.
EVERYONE

- Positive atmosphere.
- Easy exchange of medical and social data.

As you realize, openness has some interesting advantages for you, your child and the adoptive family. Openness promotes a healthy attitude for everyone involved.

PROCEDURES OF OPENNESS

Open adoption or cooperative adoption departs from the traditional adoption in four major ways:

- Birthparents select adoptive parents.
- Meetings between birthparents and adoptive parents are available and encouraged.
- An earlier bond between adoptive parents and the child is enabled.
- A plan for communication, exchange of pictures, developmental updates, and on-going contact can be arranged.

Guides entitled "The Adoption Plan" and "The Hospital Plan" will be provided to help you think through your preferences.

Three important parts of your complete adoption plan are as follows:

I. SELECT THE ADOPTIVE FAMILY

Determining which family will love and care for your child is an awesome responsibility. Most birthparents relish the opportunity to responsibly plan for their child's future. It is the most astounding exercise in clarifying your values you'll ever experience.

There are various levels of involvement in the selection experience and you may choose the sort of involvement you are most comfortable with.

The first level is the specification of the type of family you feel would constitute the best resources for your child. Needless to say, you will want to get past superficial matters and get into truly important issues. We will discuss with you a number of important factors, helping you refine your ideas and come to some kind of clear idea about the kind of family you want as the parents of your child. We then use this input to narrow the field of suitable prospects, which helps you to be efficient, but also gives you the benefit of the Agency’s knowledge of the possible candidates. The families we acquaint you with should be appropriate for your child.
After narrowing the field, the next level is to present you with a variety of information about each of the prospective couples. The couples are given an outline and suggestions for presenting information. We review the information with them, but do not insist upon the amount of information, how specific it is, how personal, how identifying. You may need to request more information, ask questions of the couples or about the information you have received. If you are looking for the perfect family that "has it all," chances are good that you will be disappointed. They are often wonderful, but they are never perfect.

The selection process usually occurs sometimes in the 6 weeks prior to the due date. Our experience has shown to make this selection too soon is to create a period of prolonged suspense and high anxiety, which is rather hard on all of the participants.

THE ADOPTIVE PARENTS

All of the prospective adoptive families will have some things in common. They have all approached the Agency about adoption out of their own initiative and have had enough motivation to endure a certain amount of bureaucracy. They have survived our evaluation of them and have impressed us as high potential resources for children.

The State of Illinois requires that anyone who adopts through a licensed Child Welfare Agency must be licensed. This means that the couple must pass a criminal background check and never have been guilty of child abuse or neglect. They must provide a physician's report indicating that they are in good health. The names of people who are not related to them and who have observed them around children must be provided to the Agency. The Agency sends letters to each of these people asking questions about the character of the Adoptive couple. The Agency must also investigate the house of the adoptive couple making sure it is safe, healthy, and adequate for a child. Finally, interviews with the couple are required before they can be licensed.

Our Agency examines the quality and stability of their marriage, their attitude toward children and childhood discipline, the relationship with friends and family, their use of leisure time, their religious practice and economic stability. We look not for perfect couples, but for couples who are emotionally stable, have a good marriage, healthy attitudes about child rearing, have a sound reputation, a healthy understanding and attitude toward adoption.
In addition to these qualities, our Agency also expects a couple to be married at least 3 years (most are married about 10 years). Whatever their faith, we require a letter from their pastor indicating that they regularly attend church and practice their faith. Our couples attend a group preparation program. During this program, the couples take a look at their attitude about adoption, how they have dealt with and are presently feeling about their infertility, and their attitude about birthparents. A panel of birthparents who have completed a plan for adoption, experienced adoptive couples and an adult adoptee share with them how they feel about their decision for adoption or their experience with the adoption. The Agency's policies regarding adoption and the Agency's openness policy is thoroughly reviewed during this preparation program.

II: COMMUNICATION PLAN

This step may be the most difficult to pin down precisely. While it is difficult to construct a long-term plan, it is relatively simple to construct a plan for the first year. The first plan sets the tone for the years ahead. The agreement is cooperatively among by the birthparent, adoptive parents and Agency at the first meeting. Additional meetings can be arranged to clarify the adoption plan and develop the relationship. The initial agreement should address such variables as the type of communication, e.g. letters, developmental update and/or pictures, the frequency of contact, the intermediary, and the determination of who will be involved. Of course, this beginning agreement is understood to be amendable. Since people's circumstances and needs change over the years.

It takes everyone's efforts to establish and maintain a cooperative attitude and a willingness to make compromises.

We have identified a few simple principles, which give the arrangement some structure and direction:

- The best interest of the adoptee must prevail.
- Adoptive parents, by virtue of their everyday involvement with the child, are in the best position to know what is the child’s best interests. They have bottom line responsibility and authority.
- Communication works best if it is honest and kind. Hopefully, participants in the relationship will take the time to consider issues from the other person's perspective.
- All parties are free to propose new ideas.
- All parties are free to veto proposals. Vetoes prevail.
- It is wise to periodically review and revise the arrangement.
- The Agency remains available to mediate whatever disagreements might arise.

Hopefully, it is clear that the plan depends on goodwill among the various participants. There are no "have to's" and there is no "heavy" on duty to enforce the arrangement. It is simply a matter of caring people working together on behalf of the child they hold so dear.

After the adoption is finalized in court, approximately 6 to 9 months after the couple takes the child home, our Agency no longer has custody of the child. The adoptive parents raise the child as their own without our supervision.

Another consideration in your communication plan is writing a letter to your child. In this letter we recommend you:

- Explain to the child why you have planned for adoption.
- Tell the child how you feel about him/her.
- Tell the child about any brothers or sisters he/she may have.
- Share anything you wish about yourself such as your physical description, education, hobbies, future plans or dreams.
- You may want to provide a symbolic gift for your child, something that had a special meaning to you. For example jewelry, or a special outfit, your grandmother gave you or a current photograph of yourself can all be special.
- If you choose to write a letter to the adoptive parents, you may want to include how you feel about adoption and to give them your blessing.

These letters and gifts demonstrate your love and concern for the child. At the time when the adoptive couple feels the child is able to understand they will share your letter and gift with the child.

Your letter will go a long way towards answering the child's questions and easing the child's mind. Even though we present the adoptive couple with a brief description of you and your background, it is important that the child actually receive this information in your own handwriting.

The adoptive couple provides to you, through the Agency, three photographs of the child when he/she is about one month and three months and again at five months of age. The photographs are for you if you want them. Some birthparents find the photographs reassuring; others prefer not to have a
Of course, in the communication plan the letters, photographs, and gifts are all optional.

Though we may encourage some of the practices we realize the decision is yours. We would be happy to talk with you about these decisions.

**LEVEL OF FACE-TO-FACE CONTACT**

In this step there are different decisions you must make; whether you want face-to-face contact prior to the birth of the child or after the birth of the child. The Agency tries to obtain as much information as possible about the participants in the adoption experience. The experience of meeting each other can allow for the beginning of a unique relationship and enables the convenient flow of vital information. It is a truly unique experience.

There are countless variations on how the meetings can occur. The only rule governing the meetings is that people treat each other with kindness and honesty.

The first meeting is often at the Agency, but can occur at any mutually agreed upon place. Your social worker will be there for moral support, to make introductions and to help get things going. Everyone starts out a little nervous, but usually it doesn't take long for things to warm up.

There is so much to learn about each other. You probably want to learn about reasons leading them to get into adoption and what sort of experience it has been for them. You will no doubt want to get some sense of their child-rearing style. The prospective adoptive parents will want to learn about your medical history, about your relationship with the other birthparent, your reason for choosing adoption and your reasons for being interested in them.

If, for some reason, a meeting doesn't work out, your social worker will assist you in refining and revising your adoption plan.

There are important dynamics to be aware of prior to arranging a meeting. First impressions can be very valuable but they can also be very misleading. It is possible to be distracted by superficialities, such as what people are wearing, and to overlook what is in their hearts and souls. It is VERY IMPORTANT for you to realize that when you meet a couple and activate their high hopes for a child, you put a lot of pressure on yourself. We worry that you may pressure yourself into an adoption decision because you don't want to disappoint the Smiths who are such nice people and are so excited about the baby.
Your decision must be based on what's good for you and your baby, not what is good for them. Once you meet them, it becomes extremely difficult, if not impossible, to factor them out of your thinking. OUR ADVICE IS THAT IF YOU ARE THE LEAST BIT UNSURE OF YOUR DECISION, DO NOT MEET THE PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE PARENTS PRIOR TO THE BABY'S ARRIVAL. Leave yourself total freedom to change your mind.

A change of plans is a disappointment to them. Although it is sad for them, they will likely be happy for you.

Remember, too, our adoptive parents go into these plans fully aware of the risks and, at least intellectually, are well prepared.

Experience has taught us our parents are resilient; they bounce back and take those same risks again because the ideas make sense to them. Your change of heart does not condemn them to childlessness. You chose them and they will be chosen again.

If you do change your mind, it creates role reversal. Now it is they who need reassurance that the baby will be okay. We ask if you do change your mind, that you please consider writing a letter to them explaining your decision, offering feedback about them, and reassuring them that the baby will be well taken care of. Turnabout is fair play.

Despite the previous warning about planning in advance of the child's birth, there can be some pleasing advantages to prior planning if your are ENORMOUSLY sure of your decision. Some birthparents have told us that meeting the prospective adoptive parents has brought them tremendous peace of mind. They have sometimes had the effect of bringing meaning to the pregnancy and relieving the vague sense of guilt about the pregnancy and the adoption plan. In some instances it has given the birthmother an ally, someone who is truly excited about her pregnancy and interested in her well-being. Another benefit we have seen is that meeting shifts the proposed adoption from abstraction to reality. We have seen birthparent meet the prospective adoptive parents, like and approve of them, but realize adoption was actually going to prove emotionally impossible. Expectant parents are then freed up to enjoy what remains of their pregnancy and make the last minute preparations necessary to take the baby home.
For the prospective adoptive parents, the benefits of selection prior to the birth are also numerous. It offers them a time of expectancy and a time of excitement. In some instances, adoptive mothers have become the birthmother's labor coach and have been directly involved in the miracle of the birth. If you choose early connections some things you might want to consider:

- Inviting the adoptive parents to visit at the hospital.
- Inviting the adoptive parents to be present at the labor and delivery.
- Inviting the adoptive mother to become the labor coach.

Before you decide to allow an early connection with your baby, remember there is some hazard for you. The time you are in the hospital is a time when you wish to have a very exclusive relationship with your baby. It may well be your only opportunity for that sort of relationship and is certainly not at all selfish to enjoy that time free from the "intrusion" (even if it's by your design, it may feel like intrusion) of others. You may need that private time with your baby to make your final decision. You may need that time to begin working through your grief. It is important that you tend to your needs at such a momentous time. It is an occasion to be thoroughly assertive in protecting your interests.

Your stay in the hospital will be a very special time. How you will handle this time in the hospital is most important. To plan for your stay will make sure you are in control. All decisions about your contact and care of the child in the hospital are your decisions. We suggest you use the guide called *The Hospital Plan* to think through and to choose your preferences.

Based on our experience, we recommend you include in your plan the following: We encourage you to see and hold your baby. We feel you need to say goodbye, feel confident in your decision and know in your heart who this child is.

**ONE THING WE WANT TO BE VERY CLEAR ABOUT. WE DO NOT SEE OPENNESS AS A FORM OF CO-PARENTING. THERE CAN BE NO CONFUSION AS TO WHO IS IN CHARGE, FOR SUCH CONFUSION CAN BE VERY DAMAGING TO CHILDREN. THE OBJECTIVE FACT IS THAT IN THE EYES OF THE LAW, THE ADOPTIVE PARENTS ARE IN EVERY MANNER THE PARENTS OF THE CHILD AND YOU ARE A LEGAL STRANGER TO HIM OR HER. ANY AGREEMENTS MADE BETWEEN YOU AND THE ADOPTIVE PARENTS ARE "MORAL" ONES AND ARE NOT LEGALLY BINDING. YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE ADOPTIVE FAMILY IS SURELY NOT THAT OF A RIVAL PARENT, BUT MAY BE THAT OF A SPECIAL FRIEND. IT CAN BE A DELIGHTFUL ROLE.**
ADDITION: THE LEGAL PROCESS

Any decision you make now for adoption can only be tentative. Although the birthfather can sign a legal document, called a Surrender, prior to the birth of the child, this Surrender does not become effective until at least 72 hours after the birth of the child. In signing a Surrender, you voluntarily choose not to exercise your right as a parent and give responsibility to our Agency to provide care for the child and find an adoptive couple. Birthmothers cannot sign Surrenders until 72 hours after the birth of the baby. After at least 72 hours have passed and you have signed the Surrender you cannot change your mind.

YOUR DECISION IS FINAL.

Until you have signed Surrenders, your child will be placed in a loving baby home or with the adoptive couple directly from the hospital, whichever is your plan. The Agency will have you sign a voluntary placement agreement. This allows the Agency to obtain only custody and provide any medical treatment if needed. The hospital will also have you sign a paper allowing us to take the child from the hospital.

Once you sign Surrenders you need not sign anything else or appear in court. Of course, you may have made arrangements and decided on a plan in which you leave the hospital with the child and personally present the child to the adoptive parents.

The adoptive couple must hire a lawyer after the child is placed in their home. The lawyer asks the court to set a date for the final adoption and give permission to the couple to care for the child in the meantime. About 6 months later the couple goes to court to legally adopt the child. During the 8-month period, an Agency worker visits with the couple and the child in their home at least three times to ensure that the child is receiving proper care and affection. We testify about this in court and recommend the adoption.

Once the adoption occurs, our legal connection with the child ends and the child becomes the child of the adoptive couple just as if the child was born to them.

MEDICAL CARE

No doubt you are concerned about how you are going to pay the doctor and hospital bills. We encourage you to check into any insurance coverage your family may have. You may discover that insurance may cover the bulk of your expenses. You may be on Public Aid and your medical eligibility care is accepted by your physician and the hospital. Or you may know that you have no insurance and no Public Aid benefits. If this is the case, please notify your caseworker immediately. You and your caseworker will explore all possible resources to secure medical care and the payment of your medical bills.
IF YOU COMPLETE THE PLAN OF ADOPTION, THE AGENCY MAY ASSIST IN THE PAYMENT OF USUAL AND CUSTOMARY MEDICAL COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PREGNANCY AND DELIVERY NOT COVERED BY YOUR INSURANCE. EACH CASE WILL BE DETERMINED ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS AND PRIOR APPROVAL MUST BE SECURED FROM THE AGENCY BEFORE THE PAYMENT OF MEDICAL CARE CAN OCCUR.

IN THE CASE OF UNUSUAL COSTS RESULTING FROM MEDICAL COMPLICATIONS, WE WILL ASSIST YOU IN FINDING RESOURCES TO HELP YOU COVER THOSE COSTS.

AFTER CARE

Many birthparents experience a period of second-guessing after they have completed a plan for adoption. "Did I do the right thing? Will my baby be okay? Will my baby remember me? What will he/she think of me later on?" These are some of the common questions. Second-guessing is normal. Anytime someone has lost another person by death, divorce, breaking up, moving away, or by completing a plan for adoption, there will be feelings of anger, depression and regret. Our counselors are available to help you through these experiences. Other birthparents, who have completed a plan for adoption, are available to listen and to share with you also.

Please stay in touch and feel free to make contact with us at any time in the future. As you think through this very difficult decision, please be assured of our continued prayers and support.

ADOPTION REGISTRY

The Illinois Department of Public Health operates the Adoption Registry for birthparents and adult adoptees (21 years of age and older) who wish to make contact with each other. The birthparents may register at any time. The adoptive person must wait until he/she is 21 years old unless his/her adoptive parents give permission to register at age 18 to 20 years.

You will be signing a Statement of Intent at the time you sign surrenders. This statement indicates your desire regarding future contact and/or exchange of information. This is not a binding statement and you may change your mind anytime you wish simply by notifying the Agency in writing of your intentions.
If you wish to register with the State Adoption Registry we will gladly provide you with the forms. There is a charge of $40.00 payable to the Illinois Department of Public Health if you do not wish to share genetic/medical history. This fee of $40.00 will be waived if you provide genetic/medical history with your registration. The Illinois Adoption/Medical Exchange Registry is independent of our Agency. Information regarding the registry made found at www.idph.state.il.us/vitalrecords/index.htm or by calling the Illinois Adoption Registry at 877-323-5299 (TOLL FREE within Illinois) or at 217-557-5159.

FUTURE CONTACT

According to our Agency policy, when an adoptee turns 18 years of age with adoptive parents permission or 21 years without adoptive parents permission, the adoptee may approach the Agency for contact with the birthparents.

Not only is the adoptee able to contact the Agency, but the birthparents may also request contact with the adoptee when the adoptee turns 21. In both cases the Agency must then contact the other party requesting written permission to release identifying information. Only when both parties have given permission to release identifying information may this information be released to both parties. At the time of the request for contact we do charge a fee for our services.
Catholic Charities
Diocese of Rockford

CATHOLIC CHARITIES
CRISIS PREGNANCY AND
ADOPTION PROGRAMS SERVICES
ARE AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT THE
DIOCESE OF ROCKFORD

If you need information or assistance regarding any of
these services or wish to schedule an appointment in
your area please call Jamie Weigand at (630) 820-3220.

Aurora Office
1700 N. Farnsworth Ave., Suite #28
Aurora, IL 60505
(630) 820-3220

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www.catholiccharities.rockforddiocese.org

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