**WHO CAN I CONTACT TO DISCUSS A VOLUNTARY POST ADOPTION CONTACT AGREEMENT?**

- Your Caseworker
- Your Guardian ad litem
- Child Welfare Court
- Your attorney (in cases of private adoption)

**INFORMATION REGISTRY**

The Pennsylvania Adoption Information Registry (PAIR) is a database of information about youth who have been adopted. The information in PAIR includes social history information and medical history information. You can use the PAIR to register your adoption information and to request your social and medical history, if any is on file. You may also use the PAIR to request contact with your birth relatives, including your birth parents, birth grandparents and birth siblings. Your birth parents and birth siblings can also register with the PAIR to request contact with you. You must be at least 18 to file information with the PAIR. If you are not 18, your adoptive parent can file information on your behalf. To file information or to request information from the PAIR, please visit www.adoptpakids.org

**RELEASE OF AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

In addition to requesting information from the PAIR, certain individuals may also request information from courts and agencies including information that is non-identifying, identifying as well as requesting contact with family members.

# VOLUNTARY POST ADOPTION CONTACT AGREEMENT

AN EXPLANTION FOR YOUTH BY YOUTH

*Have you ever considered being adopted? Do you have siblings who are being adopted? If so, you need to know about voluntary post-adoption contact agreements… these agreements can keep you in contact with your family after you or your siblings have been adopted. They provide the opportunity to benefit from an adoptive family while maintaining relationships with your relatives*

*A family is a place where minds come in contact with one another. If these minds love one another, the home will be as beautiful as a flower garden. But if these minds get out of harmony with one another, it is like a storm that plays havoc with the garden. - Buddha*

***This brochure was developed by the Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board***

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this brochure is to explain to you what a voluntary post-adoption contact (agreement) is and how it benefits you. It is an agreement between you, birth relative(s) and adoptive parents. The agreement allows you to still have contact with your birth family after you have been adopted. However, choosing to participate or not participate in this agreement DOES NOT affect your adoption status at all.

## WORDS TO KNOW

**Parties** – Everyone that is involved with the agreement. This includes you, birth relatives and adoptive parents. If you have a caseworker or guardian ad litem they too may be involved.

**Birth Relatives** – A parent, grandparent, stepparent, sibling, aunt or uncle who is related to you by blood, marriage or adoption.

**PAIR** – The Pennsylvania Adoption Information Registry which is a database of information about youth who have been adopted.

**Youth** – Any person under the age of 18.

## TYPES OF CONTACT

Different types of contact can be included in the agreement that you, your birth relatives and your adoptive parents develop. Examples of these types of contact include:

- Mail/letters
- Photos/Videos
- Phone Calls
- Emails
- Visits

These types of contact can occur as little or as often as the parties decide. This will be determined while the agreement is being written. Later the youth can decide to increase or decrease the amount of visits, he/she has to discuss this with their adoptive parents and then petition the court. These changes can be made without going to court; however, they are not enforceable unless authorized by the court.

## LOCATION OF CONTACT

The location of the contact or visits can be anywhere the agreement states. These places could be:

- The home of a birth relative or adoptive parents
- A park or restaurant
- A Children and Youth Agency

During the creation of the contract, these locations will be determined by the parties involved. It has to be a place where the parties feel safe.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**What is a voluntary post-adoption contract agreement?**

A voluntary post-adoption contract agreement is an agreement between you, your birth relatives and adoptive parents. The agreement allows you to have contact with your birth relatives after you have been adopted. It is approved by the courts and outlines what type of contact occurs and how often.

**What if I don't want a voluntary post adoption contact agreement?**

That's fine. These agreements are voluntary and can only be entered into if you, your adoptive parents and your birth relatives agree to have one. Also, you can have different agreements for different birth relatives.

**Does a voluntary post adoption agreement affect my adoption at all?**

No. Entering into an agreement or refusing to enter into an agreement will not affect your adoption.