Pact Family Camp 2015

Keynote Speakers

Each morning during Pact Family Camp while children are in programming, parents and adult attendees gather together to hear from speakers in a general session who present on provocative and relevant topics to everyone concerned with the well-being of adopted children of color. This year’s keynote faculty is filled with inspiring and accomplished folks with much to offer and from whom we can all expect to learn a great deal.

School to Prison Pipeline: Dismantling Practices To Support Students of Color

- School to Prison Pipeline - Restorative & Transformative Justice
- Working with Schools to Serve Children with Special Needs

Subini Annamma, Ph.D., is an transnational and transracial Indian adoptee who grew up in Wisconsin. She is also a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Denver, Interdisciplinary Research Incubator for the Study of (In)Equality (IRISE). Before entering graduate school, she was a special education teacher working with culturally and linguistically diverse students with emotional, behavioral, and learning disabilities in public schools and juvenile justice. All of her work focuses on increasing access to equitable education for historically marginalized students and communities. Ultimately Subini focuses on how student voice can identify exemplary educational practices.

The W. Kamau Bell Curve (tentatively confirmed)

W. Kamau Bell, wkamaubell.com, is a socio-political comedian who has emerged as the post-modern voice of comedy. Kamau was recently named an Ambassador of Racial Justice by the ACLU. And he sits on the advisory board of Race Forward, a non-profit and movement to end street harassment. Kamau is best known for his critically acclaimed, but criminally short-lived FX comedy series, Totally Biased with W. Kamau Bell. The New York Times called Kamau “the most promising new talent in political comedy in many years.” The SF Weekly called Kamau “smart, stylish, and very much in the mold of politically outspoken comedians like Dave Chappelle.”

Race-ing to See Ourselves: An Interactive Session of Listening and Learning

- My Experience of Adoption

David Campt, Ph.D., David Campt’s life has always been deeply affected by the racial divides in America. In 1997, David graduated as the first African-American male doctoral recipient from the City and Regional Planning Department at UC Berkeley. David was a senior policy advisor the President Clinton’s Initiative on Race, which brought national and statewide dialogue campaigns. Since leaving the initiative in 1999, David is now a speaker and consultant for institutions concerned about lessening divisions and expanding a sense of common purpose and stronger community. David is a reunited adult adoptee who grew up with African American adoptive parents.

Holding Multiple Complexities in Our Conversations

- What Does It Mean To Be a White Ally
- When Folks Within Our Own Communities Don’t Get It
- Talking with Our Children About Sex and SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Expression)

Amy Cipolla-Stickles, amystickles@gmail.com, has long been involved in struggles for equity and justice for transracial adoptees, children and families impacted by the foster care system, teenage parents, and people who are financially unstable. With over 12 years experience in multicultural leadership and facilitation, Amy has lead trainings in schools, social service agencies, health care organizations and foundations. She holds a Master’s degree in International and Multicultural Education with a concentration in Human Rights from the University of San Francisco. Amy is herself transracially adopted, she also self-identifies as a biracial Black lesbian.

Our Parenting Journey

Beth Hall, Director, Pact, An Adoption Alliance, beth@pactadopt.org, is the white adoptive mother of a Latina daughter and an African American son (both now young adults), and grew up with an adopted sister. She co-founded Pact in 1991 to combat the discrimination she witnessed against adopted children of color and their birth families. She is the co-author of Inside Transracial Adoption (Jessica Knightly Publishing, 2013), as well as numerous articles on adoption and race. She is a nationally known advocate for adopted children of color who regularly lectures and leads workshops on ethical, non-racist adoption practices. In 2010 she received the Outstanding Practitioner in Adoption Award from the Adoption Initiative at St. John’s University.
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My Mind’s Blueprint: An Oppressed Identity Construct Model
• The Harris Racial Identity Construct
Susan Harris O’Connor, MSW, author of The Harris Narratives: An Introspective Study of a Transracial Adoptee is a nationally known solo performance artist whose groundbreaking identity model narratives have contributed to a new, non-pathologizing way of understanding complex human identities. Susan’s narratives have been performed over 100 times as keynote addresses, featured performances, lectures and trainings at colleges, social service agencies, special events. She is published by the Yale Journal of Law and Feminism, The British Journal of Adoption and Fostering and in 2014 she received the Outstanding Practitioner In Adoption Award from St. John’s University.

Adoption Activism
• The Long and Winding Path to Adulthood - Parenting Adolescents
• Working with Schools to Serve Children with Special Needs
JaeRan Kim, LISW (www.jaerankim.com), is a writer, teacher and researcher. JaeRan was born in South Korea and adopted into a white family in Minnesota. She created Harlow’s Monkey, a blog about transracial and transnational adoption (www.harlows-monkey.com) and has managed an adoption competency certification program for child welfare and mental health professionals for five years. Her research focuses on intersectional issues related to race, disability and international contexts of adoption, and the preparation of adoption competent professionals. JaeRan has a doctoral degree in social work from the University of Minnesota and will begin an Assistant Professor position at University of Washington - Tacoma in the fall.

Choice in Adoption
• Digging Deeper in Open Adoptions
• Birth Fathers: The Missing Voice in Adoption
Kathleen Nielson, MSW (kathleenmnielson@gmail.com) is a relinquishing mother who placed her son for adoption 14 years into a fully open transracial adoption. Additionally she is a trained social worker currently pursuing a doctoral degree in social work with a focus on adoption research. The rhetoric of choice has been applied to many topics including abortion, women in the workforce, and educational segregation. Kathleen will draw on her experience as a relinquishing mother, social worker, and adoption researcher to discuss how the rhetoric of choice stifles discussion, prevents us from being the best constellation members we can be, and impedes reform in the adoption industry.

To Have and To Hold: Understanding Parent-Child Attachment
• The Dance of Attachment: Honing Your Skills
• To Have and To Hold; Continuing the Conversation
Holly van Gulden, is co-author of Real Parents, Real Children: Parenting the Adopted Child, and The Dance of Attachment. Since 1985, Holly van Gulden has been training adoptive and foster parents and professionals throughout the United States, England, Scotland and Canada. In addition, for over fifteen years, Holly has co-directed Adoptive Family Counseling Center. Holly earned her B.S. from the University of Chicago and is completing her Master’s Thesis for St. Mary’s University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Holly is herself an adoptive parent she grew up in a multi-racial, international family comprised of six children born to the family, four adopted children and several foster brothers and sisters.
Talkig About Sensitive Information - When to Tell What
S. Kripa Cooper-Lewter, Ph.D. (from the University of South Carolina as a Council of Social Work Education Minority Fellow with a dissertation on explored identity journeys of women adopted transnationally), MSW (from the University of Minnesota as a Title-IV E Child Welfare Scholar) is an Indian-American social worker, author and life coach. She has twenty years social work experience in the nonprofit, health, education and philanthropic sector. Throughout her career, she has focused on child welfare issues while strengthening individuals, families and communities. Previously President/ CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Columbia, she currently works to support families experiencing poverty, immigration and kinship care. She is a Certified Personal Executive Coach focused on women grounded in resilience.

Advice from Black and Brown Men about Raising Black and Brown Boys
Steve Kalb, SteveK@holtinternational.org, is the Director of Adoptee Services in the Post Adoption Department at Holt International. He manages all youth services, post placement reporting, and birth search counseling. His time with Holt (since 2005) has given him valuable insight into the adoptive family experience through direct work with youth and parents. Steve holds a master’s degree in community based social work. He teaches in the Graduate School of Social Work at Portland State University, where he is currently pursuing his Ph.D.focusing on adoptee empowerment interventions with hopes of bringing a community organizing philosophy into post adoption practice. He is a member of Pact’s Adult Adoptee of Color Advisory Board.

I’m Not A Racist... Am I?
Nancy Kim Parsons-Borland is an internationally Korean adopted person and has been part of the Point Made Film’s team for more than five years. Along with Barb Lee, the founder of Point Made Films, Nancy produced the feature-length documentary “Adopted,” a film about the unforeseen complications in transracial adoption. In the film’s companion educational series “Adopted: We Can Do Better,” Nancy served as both a producer and the narrator. Point Made Film’s newest documentary is “I’m Not Racist… Am I?” which is a feature documentary about how this next generation is navigating racism. In the film, 12 teenagers from New York City come together for one school year to talk about race and privilege in a series of workshops and conversations with friends and family members, with the hope that their experience will inspire others to recognize and interrupt racism in their own lives. Nancy will be working with both parents and teens in using the film to explore racial issues and experiences for today’s youth.
Pact Family Camp 2015
Speakers, Facilitators & Programing Guests

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- Parent Consultations
- First/Birth Parent Camp with a Camp Programing
- In Our Own Voices: The Birth Parent Experience

Susan Dusza Guerra Leksander, LMFT, susan.leksander@gmail.com, is a psychotherapist who currently works as a Clinical Supervisor of the Family Preservation Team at a California agency whose mission is permanency for youth. She was adopted transracially at birth and reunited with her first families as a teenager and is also a first mother, having placed her daughter for adoption in 2001 in an “open” adoption, which was subsequently closed by the adoptive parents. She is the author of the “Ask a First (Birth) Mother” column published in Pact’s quarterly newsletter, President of the Board for On Your Feet Foundation (OYFF) of Northern California, a member of the Adoption Museum Project’s advisory team and serves on Pact’s Adult Adoptee of Color Advisory Board.

- Advice from Black and Brown Women about Raising Black and Brown Girls

Malaika Parker, malaika@pactadopt.org, works with adoptive parents of color (and their parenting partners) to design resources and create community for same-race adoptive families. As an African American adoptive parent, she understands how hard-and-important it is for same-race adoptive parents to find resources that apply to their own family dynamics as opposed to those that apply to transracial families. Malaika is currently pursuing a masters and teaching credential in childhood education. Malaika and her husband Saul have three children, two of who are adopted.

- Advice from Black and Brown Men about Raising Black and Brown Boys

Angel Martinez, angelmartinezeduca@gmail.com, is an internationally recognized sex educator/trainer who is currently lead instructor for GoJoven a nine year leadership development program in Honduras, Guatemala, Belize and Mexico run by The Public Health Institute. Angel has more than thirty years experience in community organization and development of training design and curricula, community health, and family planning/population issues. He has been guest lecturer on community development, child and adolescent health, and human sexuality at many colleges and universities. He and his wife Raquel attend Pact Camp regularly with their two adopted children.

- Talking with Our Children About Sex and SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Expression)

Chad Sojourner Goller is a Seattle-based writer, storyteller, solo-performer and recipient of a distinguished Washington State Arts Commission Performing Arts Fellowship. He served as the 2013 Ohio University Glidden Visiting Professor, his work focused on the social, political and historical dimensions of multi-identity construction and intersectionality. He is currently expanding his two solo-performance shows: Riding in Cars with Black People & Other Newly Dangerous Acts and Sitting in Circles with Rich White Girls: Memoirs of a Bulimic Black Boy, into a memoir. Chad identifies as a Black, Gay man who was adopted transracially.

- Advice from Black and Brown Men about Raising Black and Brown Boys

Michael Thompson, mlthomp@gmail.com, and his wife Michele are an inter-racial couple (he is African American, she is white) who adopted their multiracial daughter through Pact, and Michael currently serves on Pact’s Board of Directors. He is an Instructor of History at Chabot College, where he specializes in African American and American History. His work at Chabot also includes his membership in the Daraja Learning Community for African American students, and participation in faculty inquiry groups exploring issues of poverty and equity and habits of the mind. “I know of no other organization that puts together the issues of race and adoption with compassion, intelligence and a mission to advocate like Pact does.”

- Our Children in School - Navigating Self Esteem and Bullying
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- **This Adopted Life** - with adopted youth ages 8 and up
  
  Angela Tucker, angela@theadoptedlife.com, is a transracial adoptee and the subject of the documentary, Closure (available on Netflix, iTunes & Hulu). She uses her personal story to educate others and encourage stimulating and transformative conversation amongst adoptive parents, adoptees, birth parents and prompt procedural change specifically around adoptee rights. Angela’s unique worldview, passion for humanity and justice combined with her education and work experience in the social work field combine to form powerful and engaging presentations, while maintaining great respect for the topics. Angela has written exclusively for Christianity Today, the Dave Thomas Foundation and provided a widely read rebuttal response to NPR’s piece on transracial adoption. She has been featured on BBC World Have Your Say, Huffington Post, Slate Magazine, The Daily Kos, Adoption.com

- **Film/Videographer**
  
  Bryan Tucker, is the filmmaker of Closure, a feature-length documentary that followed his wife Angela, in her search and reunion with her birth family. Closure enjoyed television broadcast runs on PBS, Aspire TV, and is available to stream on Hulu and Netflix. As a freelance videographer, Bryan is passionate about communicating ideas and telling stories through video with a variety of clients. He is a writer/producer for the Pacific Northwest current affairs program Inside Outlook, where he has focused on episodes addressing issues such as mass incarceration, police code and conduct, tax reform, and immigration. Bryan is currently in development of a new documentary centered around a maternity center in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti, that provides support for pregnant women and family preservation.

- **Exploring Feelings About Adoption** - with 6 - 9 year olds

- **Talking with Young Children About Adoption**

  Jeanette Yoffe, MFT, is a licensed psychotherapist. She specializes in treating psychological and emotional challenges related to adoption and/or foster care. She is also the founder of Celia Center, a non-profit support center for all those connected by foster care/adoptation within the constellation and beyond. She performs intervention trainings for adoptees, foster and adoptive parents, psychotherapists and social workers as well as monthly support groups called Adopt Salon. Her passion for her work stems from her own experience growing up in foster care and being adopted at the age of seven and a half. She is author of the book Groundbreaking Interventions.

- **Creating Relationships with Folks from Your Child’s Heritage Community**

  Katie Wynen, katie@pactadopt.org, an international, transracial Colombian adoptee, has a Masters in Social Work. After college, Katie worked at Hyde School in CT where she helped design a program for adopted youth and parents. Katie studied under Dr. Joyce Maguire Pavao in Boston before moving to California and joining the Pact staff where she leads groups, works with expectant/birth parents and provides psycho-educational counseling to pre-adoptive & adoptive parents.