

Ad Campaign Launched For the 'Hard-to-Adopt'

By KATHLEEN POWERS
Capitol Correspondent

"Have a child. It's as beautiful as having a baby."

That's the theme of a statewide advertising campaign seeking parents for about 2,400 hard-to-place children legally available for adoption. If you haven't seen the ads already, you will soon, in newspapers, on television and over the radio.

The campaign began earlier this year when a computerized matching system for children and prospective parents did not lead to as many adoptions as state officials had hoped. The officials decided that more prospective parents were needed, persons who, on their own, might not inquire about adoption because they might think they do not qualify.

So the New York State Department of Social Services and the New York State Board of Social Welfare contacted an advertising firm in New York City who developed an advertising campaign that would attract different kinds of persons interested in adoption. To date the central office in Albany has received 600 inquiries from individuals and couples interested in adoption, and local agencies throughout the state have reported to Albany that hundreds of other persons have contacted them directly.

When persons write to the Albany address given in the ads (Box 7290, Albany, 12223) they receive a brief booklet in either English or Spanish explaining

what children are available for adoption, what qualifies prospective parents, how the agencies work with them and what the adoption procedure is.

The booklet explains that more than 2,000 children need homes. Most of them are more than eight years old; most are boys; most have average intelligence or better. Half have a handicap and half are black.

The booklet dispels many fears that some persons have about adoption. Adoptive parents don't have to be young, or childless, or even married. They don't have to be the same race as their child. Parents don't have to own their home or have much money. The state provides subsidies to help with costs for some children, especially those with medical expenses.

According to Donald Smith, a senior consultant with the Bureau of Children's Services of the State Board of Social Welfare, some of the persons who might be the best adoptive parents are discouraged from adoption by rumors that are not true.

"The low to middle income black, for example," he said, "is reluctant to go to an agency. They fear they'll fail the tests, or won't have the income or will have to own a home with a back yard. We're trying to dispell these myths."

Adoptive parents of hard to place children have no common denominator, Smith said. But their attitude is different from childless couples seeking white infants. Parents of older children don't start their relationship with their child as a parent-to-child relationship. Many of the children have known other parents, including foster parents, and it takes time for solid parent-child trusts to develop.

"It's a different ball game today," said Smith. "We've got to be imaginative in looking for people to care for the kinds of kids who need homes. Some of the old criteria have had to be thrown out the window."

Financial subsidies for parents who have limited incomes and/or who adopt children with unusual medical expenses have been a part of New York State's adoption program since 1969 and have led to the adoption of hundreds of hard-to-place children. In 1969 24 adoptions were completed with subsidies to adoptive parents; last year there were 490.

Smith said that the Board of Social Welfare increasingly opposes any financial means test as a criterion for adoption. However at present prospective parents cannot obtain room and board assistance nor medical assistance without qualifying because of low income. For the severely handicapped child parents may get a medical subsidy without satisfying the financial means test.

Foster care now costs the public \$4,000 a year for each child, while institutional care can cost up to \$20,000 a child. Subsidies paid to adoptive parents may not exceed what is paid for foster care.

The cost of adopting a child fluctuates depending on the income of the parents, Smith noted. Some parents pay only the attorney's fees (ranging near \$500) while most parents pay the attorney's fees, the agency costs and followup costs, or about \$2,000.

The cost of freeing a child for adoption prevents many children from ever becoming adoptable, or prevents them from becoming legally free until they are older and therefore harder to place, said Smith. Legal fees are par-

Cómo tener un niño:

Primero. Debe desear un niño. Aunque ese niño sea mayor o esté incapacitado. Si usted verdaderamente desea tener un niño, probablemente será un buen padre o madre.

Segundo. Comuníquese con una agencia de adopción. Ya no se exigen tantos requisitos como antes. Solamente debe ser una persona responsable, tener por lo menos 21 años y un ingreso permanente. Un padre adoptivo no tiene que ser joven, o no tener niños, o ser casado o ser rico. Tampoco tiene que tener casa propia.

Tercero. Deje que su trabajador social le ayude a escoger al niño apropiado. Vea las fotografías de los niños y conózcalos por medio del trabajador social... Hasta que usted sienta que ha encontrado a su hijo.

Cuarto. Conozca a su hijo y llévalo a casa por seis meses y por último, vaya a la corte y adoptelo... para siempre.

En algunos casos, el Estado de Nueva York le puede ayudar con asistencia económica especial. Con excepción de algunos pequeños detalles, esto es todo lo que usted tiene que hacer. Escriba la dirección abajo indicada si desea recibir más información. Adoptar un niño es mucho más fácil de lo que pensó... y más bello de lo que pueda imaginar.



Adopte un niño. Es tan bello como si lo hubiese traído al mundo
Escriba: Adoption, Box 7290, Albany, New York, 12223

The above advertisement was created for the New York State Board of Social Welfare and Department of Social Services to attract prospective parents of hard-to-place children available for adoption. Most of the children are of school age, half are black and many have physical and emotional handicaps. Approximately 2,400 children could be adopted if parents could be found for them.

ticularly expensive, yet necessary. Agencies pay the cost of attorney fees and are reimbursed at the rate of 15 cents a day per child, hardly a token.

So many children's adoptions are held up for years. Smith estimates that there are at least as many children waiting to have their cases investigated so they can be free for adoption as there are children free now.

Changing that situation is a long range goal of the Bureau of Social Welfare. The short range goal is to adopt the 2,400 children now available. "When you have a backlog of 2,400 kids, that's not a course of inspiration for working to free other kids. Why work to free some 13-year-old hard-to-place child if you know you can't adopt him?" asked Smith.

And so the ad campaign.

Regents Winners Named

These area Catholic high schools have recently announced New York State Regents Scholarship winners:

Bishop Kearney High School:

Richard Agnello, Michael Bossert, Margaret Boychuk, William Brown, Brian Callan, Mary Callan, John Camp, Kevin Cole, Cheryl DeSimone, David Dobrzynski, Timothy Dowling, James Eckert, Laurie Fedigan, Brian Fink, Robert Franki, Margaret Gorski, Robert Hahn, Kevin Hasson, William Healy, Douglas Heim, Agnes Hickey, Peter Hyk, Stephen Incavo, Mary Ann Kaweck, Alison Kilmer, Susan Kunz, Daniel Leonard, Kathleen Mahoney, Genevieve Mickys, David Mongeau, Kevin Moran, Mary Nigro, Stephen Olejarski, Paul Ozminowski, Kathleen Pedulla, Anthony Piazza, Mary Quinn, Laurie Rapp, Leslie Roth, David Rothfuss, Patrick Ryan, Mary Sue Schaeffer, Brian Schuetz, Mark Smith, John Sneeringer, Joseph Speranza, Marie Speranza, Mary Jo Vaima, Joseph Viola, Richard Wahl, Mary Jane Witzel, Mary Young, Joseph Ziegler.

Alternates: Patrick Bates, William Bayer, Robert Bond, Margaret Burke, James Cala, Louise Christensen, Joanne Coco, Timothy Conheady, John DeMaria, John DeSanctis, Patricia DiFabio, Joan Ezzow, Thomas

Fame, Jonathan Forward, Mark Francek, Robert Graff, Carol Gruarino, Susan Hoffard, Rosemary Holz, Bonnie Hope, Kenneth Infarinato, Maureen Keegan, James Lariviere, Maureen LaTemple, Margaret Mason, Patricia Mira, John Nurryk, Michael Palis, Elizabeth Pannone, Terry Priacipe, John Richards, Frank Rinere, Regina Rizzolo, Ann Marie Schlueter, Bernard Updike, Paul Wesley, C. Williams, Paul Young, Mary Rose Zimmer.

Nursing Scholars: Louise Christensen, Joann Ezzow, Carol Guarino, Susan Hoffard, Rosemary Holz, Bonnie Hope, Maura Maguire, Kathleen Micciche, Joyce Pavia, Mary Spiegel, Karen Spitale.

Alternates: Wanda Buda, Sheila Casey, Joan Ceranowicz, Susan DiGaetano, Carol Hutteman.

Our Lady of Mercy High School: Christie Ayers, Patricia Cook, Anne Corcoran, Doreen Digan, Patricia Gaffney, Sheila Garred, Nancy Grady, Lois Gruenauer, Marylee Hanshaw, Mary Ann Hanss, Carole Hill, Kathleen Kaufman, Noel Knille, Leslie Latt, Lauren McDonald, Caroline Mercury, Janet Mylius, Mary Nunn, Mary O'Brien, Adele Richardson, Beth Schaubert, Patricia Schnorr, Kathleen Weider, Mary Zimmer.

Alternates: Martha Fraver, Laurie Grant, Brigid Hayes, Mary Loyer, Jean Norton, Mary Porter, Mary Roth, Maureen Sullivan, Patricia Guiffre, Terry Noeth, Carol Reitschky, Aileen Springer, Margaret Bergin, Kathleen Clarke, Patricia Clarke, Jean DiVincenzo, Margaret Gallagher, Jill Gallipeau, Tracy Hamilton, Ellen Hammele, Mary Jo Hartman, Julie Stanwix, Katherine Herzog, Billie Izard, Elizabeth Jenny, Dorothy Kaltenbach, Colleen Kelly, Susan Kemp, Karen Kirchoff, Mary Pat Limbeck, Michele Mara, Anne Virgoil, Mary Vogt.

Winners [nursing]: Margaret Bergin, Mary Roth

Alternates [nursing]: Jill Gallipeau, Susan Kemp.

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Darrell O'Brian
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GOLDEN AGERS

The Southwest Golden Age Group will meet at 1:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 10, at 34 Monica St.

For The MAN or WOMAN IN YOU			
Styles By Steven		FOR RATE INFORMATION CALL JERRY FALZONE 454-7050	
STEVEN - P.J. - DIANE - DONNA - BARB			
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Colony House of Hair Fashions The Home of Complete Beauty Care Mr. Richard - Stylist 586-8312		Natural Cuts - or Easy Hair Care Styling - Shaping - Coloring - Straightening Hairpieces - Sales Service 902 Merchants Rd. 288-9858 (Near Culver)	

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