

# AAU YEAR IN REVIEW



## 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

313 Agency total placements

3 matches in one single day

\$21,363 raised in November!

10 AASK Home studies

Safe Haven stickers on Agency vehicles

The enchantment of Christmas is beginning to twinkle in the air! Thanks to our generous donors, the season has graced us early, as our November fundraiser shattered records, surpassing our ambitious dreams. With this newfound magic, we secured a staff vehicle, poised to journey forth before December's embrace! THANK YOU!!!

The exhilaration surrounding AAU resonates throughout the year, not just during this festive time! Among our treasured memories are the joyful laughter shared during a staff photo shoot, and the chance to support a mother referred by her sister—who found herself in difficult circumstances after childbirth. A penned heartfelt letter, a cherished keepsake she reads daily for inspiration. We also celebrated the delightful experience of traveling without encountering wildlife this year!

Another favorite 2024 memory includes a heartfelt call from a hospital delivering news of a mother seeking an adoption plan after her baby's arrival, and we were honored to honor her wishes throughout that journey. Witnessing the excitement of an adoptive family channeling their passion into helping others was a sight to behold, as was the touching moment when a family, waiting over three years, finally welcomed their little one into their lives—just to name a few!

The phrase "the days are long, but the years are short" rings profoundly true. Daily life within the agency often brims with paperwork, visits, travel, and coordination. Yet, in the blink of an eye, another year has passed. The babies we once held for a fleeting moment are blossoming into toddlers, teens, and adults. Each year, we pause to reflect, recounting every interaction, hand held, tear caught, smile shared, and stumble encountered, giving thanks for it all. We have the distinct honor of witnessing the miracle of life, the selfless love of mothers for their children, and the joyful expansion of adoptive families. We might just possess the most emotional yet rewarding vocation in the world, and we owe this privilege to our steadfast supporters. We are, indeed, an entire agency that dares to never give up. From all of us at AAU to each and every one of you, we wish you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!

# AN ADOPTIVE FAMILY ENDING 2024 AS A FAMILY OF 4

I remember getting the call from Karen, telling us that she had a possible birth mom profile for us. Then she said "She is kind of a butterfly..." (it hit me immediately that this could possibly be our son's relative, who was also adopted through the guidance and support of AAU) because this was exactly how ADs birth mom was described. My heart fluttered! Sure enough, birth mom was in fact a sister to our son's birth mom! We then waited two weeks to find out if she chose us or not, as we have always said, "it's in God's hands". We got the official news on January 12th that KP chose us to raise her baby girl as our own! There are no words to describe the feelings that came over us!

The ball definitely got rolling once KP chose us since baby was coming in April. We met in person within the next week or two. It was a great visit; I think we visited for close to 3 hours. We all gave hugs goodbye and discussed the next time that we might see each other might be in the delivery room, which was crazy to think. We were able to get together one more time before baby came and KP got to meet our son. It was a fun, but quick visit per usual when you have a toddler at a restaurant! Ha!

Then we got the call! She is in labor and heading to the hospital, so get on the road! Ha! KP had made her birth plan which did involve me being in the delivery room and cutting the cord, but as Coleen says "anything can change on the day". They sure did! Both my husband and I were able to be in the delivery room and witness the birth of MD! Again, no words to describe anything that happens at that moment or after. Eventually they did get us moved up to our rooms. We were able to be in a room close to KP. Baby MD went back and forth between our rooms during the day and we alternated nights. We tried to give KP her time with baby MD, but we were fortunate enough to have supper in her room the second night and it was WONDERFUL! We talked, and laughed and just enjoyed each other's company for hours. I think we finally headed back to our room at 11pm! That time together was truly a gift for all of us and we got some great pics! The best way to describe that time was a family reunion.

We were able to discharge together and that was very difficult. Lots of hugs and tears. There is really no preparing for that, but everybody at AAU is wonderful with helping the birth moms grieve the adoption.

We have been fortunate enough that we have been able to keep in touch with KP on a very regular basis. It has been so very rewarding; getting to know her and more about her.; being able to send her pics of MD and hearing her response. We have even been able to visit a couple of times in person. Many times, our talks are not even about MD, just about what's going on in life. Being able to talk about our faith, scripture verses that hit us in a certain way that day or week. It has been encouraging for us as adoptive parents, that KP is proud of how we are raising MD. We talk about getting together for holidays or just family gatherings and hoping to meet other family members. The future is bright and we are beyond blessed! Thank you again AAU for all of your love and support! God bless you all!

*-Love the D Family*



## MAMA KP

Momma K started the adoption process from a hard place; a family member recommended she call the agency. At first, it took a lot of faith for Momma K to trust, but with perseverance and staff that truly cared about her, she finally began to let us help her. Momma K knew she wanted the best life possible for her little one, and she knew she wanted to break the cycle that she grew up in. Momma K made the hardest decision of her life from a place of love and selflessness. She did everything in her power to obtain and develop skills to be successful including taking classes on coping skills and doing meditation. Momma K had many bumps along the road, but she stayed the course and persevered to make the greatest decision of her life. She enjoyed hospital time with baby M and her adoptive family, developing lifelong bonds and becoming family. Here are some things Momma K had to say about her experience.

*"I am doing well. I love my relationship the D family!! AAU has made a big impact on my life."*

*"My first face to face visit just happened. It was amazing!"*

*"I picked the right family and right agency"*

*"Thank you to Coleen for being so easy to talk to and not being judgy"*

**Momma K has processed so much and truly wants a better life for herself. She wants to continue making healthy choices and will do anything she can to learn how to do that.**





# Wall of Cuteness



## STATS, FACTS, AND SHOUT OUTS!

- AAU reached 1,076 individuals in 2024 with educational presentations!
- **25** placements and counting in 2024 making 313 agency placements!
- SD Housing Development Authority Shout out! We applied for and received a housing grant that reimburses us for Nevaeh House operations, utilities, and maintenance!
- AAU annual family picnic was in Omaha, Nebraska!



- AAU supporters throughout the year held Facebook fundraisers totaling **\$2,178**
- SDHDA, Emmanuel Presbyterian Women, Lincoln Hills Bible Church, Kaylor 4-H, Zion Lutheran-SF, St. Marks Lutheran, St. Johns Lutheran, Thank you for your support; we received blankets, cleaning supplies, hygiene products, monetary gifts, assistance with events, and so much more!
- A special shout out to SW of the year, Brian Brasch!!

*Thank you!*







# WHAT IS AASK?

Adults Adopting Special Kids (AASK) program is North Dakota's state foster care adoption program providing services to children in foster care and to the families who adopt them. AASK's mission is to build permanency for these children through adoption by committed, stable, and nurturing families. Catholic Charities North Dakota has a contract with the North Dakota Department of Human Services to deliver adoption services to children and families across the state.

Catholic Charities reached out to AAU in 2023 to assist with conducting home assessments. To date, All About U has completed 10 home assessments, assisting those families with establishing permanency for 13 kids.

## A note from Codie our resident ND Social worker regarding AASK:

### *What has been the most surprising thing for you ?*

The most surprising thing has been how much I have learned and grown both as a social worker and human from being welcomed into each and every home and learning about the unending commitment from these families to the children. The strength I have seen has given me a whole new perspective on parent's commitment and determination to provide permanency that every child deserves. The journey both the child and family has been on is such that most of us could not fathom but they do it with dignity, grace, and honor. Each family has done more than opening their door for each child, they hold their hand through the storm and provide them with a beautiful rainbow and the truly inspiring thing I have witnessed is how each child has actually provided the family the most beautiful rainbow. It has taught me to truly open my eyes to what a family means and what looks difficult is more often than not the start of something so breathtakingly beautiful.

Thank you Codie for all that you do, we will never have enough words to celebrate you!



*Extra Extra  
Read all About it!*



## Sunshine Fund

At last, we unveil the inspiring tale of a dedicated and spirited adoptive family who have bravely embraced the quest of crafting a grant program for fellow adoptive families through AAU. This initiative is lovingly called the Sunshine Fund. Currently, AAU's grant and scholarship offerings serve those families who have faced trials along their adoption journey, whether through a failed match or unforeseen expenses. The Sunshine Fund aims to illuminate the path for families embarking on their adoption journeys, offering grants at the very start of their adventure. As fundraising endeavors blossom, we are filled with hope to commence the grant distribution process by 2026, alongside the establishment of a lasting fund. Thank you Austin & Lindsey Claeys for you inspiration.





## A Letter from our Executive Director

Listening to that divine GPS guiding us is what keeps this agency buzzing every single day! All glory and praise to Him as we help expectant parents navigate tough choices, support families growing through adoption, and wrap our arms around those who've found their forever homes. Thank you, Lord, for the beautiful moments we've witnessed in 2024!

On a personal note, my husband Brian and I have been making memories galore with our grandkids this year. We've soaked up summer at our camper in Yankton and are busy building our dream house near Marion. Can't WAIT to rock the country life again! Oh, and I've become a Huskers fan (by default, of course), catching a couple of games in Lincoln this fall. Time is flying faster than ever!

We held our inaugural adoptive family picnic in Nebraska and wow, did we have a turnout! We're taking our show on the road, sharing all the AAU goodness at service groups, community events, schools, churches, and more across three states. Our mission? Bringing adoption education to medical and community groups, both in-person and via webinar, has been brewing for four years. And guess what? By the end of 2024, we're ready to roll out this exciting project! We're all about empowering professionals who meet expectant parents, turning adoption into a bright and positive option.

This year has seen more birthparents in Nebraska and North Dakota than ever, and we're thrilled to serve them! Nevaeh House remains a cozy haven for moms and their kiddos needing transitional support. Current project: brand new flooring for the whole main floor! Meanwhile, the AASK (Adults Adopting Special Kids) program in North Dakota is busy helping kiddos find their forever families. Our social worker Codie is a true angel, pouring her heart into ensuring these kids have a permanent home! A massive thank you to each of you playing a role in the AAU family: friends, family, donors, cheerleaders, and prayer warriors. We appreciate every single one of you! Big shoutout to the AAU staff, board, and volunteers. If you're looking to lend a hand, here are some fun ways to help:

- Donate to Nevaeh House operations
- Contribute to the Adoptive Scholarship Fund
- Support the Sunshine Fund
- Think about including AAU in your estate plan
- Host an AAU fundraiser on Facebook for your birthday or any celebration
- Honor a loved one by donating to our memorial fund

Remember, AAU is a non-profit 501c3 organization, so your donations will be tax-deductible!

Thank you for your unwavering support of AAU.

We adore our family of supporters! May God shower you all with blessings in 2025!



*-Coleen Brasch*

Giving is not just about donating, it is about making a difference.

100% of your donation goes directly to helping clients! We appreciate your contribution,

All About U Adoptions PO Box 90542 Sioux Falls SD, 57109

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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like more  
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Only By giving are you able  
to receive more than you already Have



# IN RECOGNITION OF OUR DONORS

## Friend: Contributions up to \$99 and/or in-kind donations

AAU Staff & Families, Amanda & Josh Chilson, Arlene Tieszen, Barclay Smith, Brad Carlson, Canistota FCCLA, Cathy Weber, Evelyn Duerksen, Chris Albrecht, Christa & Bryan Weber, Chuck & Cyndy Weber, Debra Debates, Design Crete-Sioux Falls, Dominick York, Edward & Patricia Kreider, Faith Alive Church, Gage Brothers, James & Joan Anderson, Jerry & Germaine Stratton, Karen Bender, Kaylor 4-H, Lincoln Hills Bible Church, Marla Jean Waters, Network For Good, Nicole Anderson, Peter Preheim, Presbyterian Church, Rachelle Duffy, St John's Lutheran-Sioux Falls, St Marks Lutheran-Margaret Bloom, Teresa Smith, Tony & Keri Satrang

## Partner: Contributions up to \$499

Adam Pillard & Johanna Peterson, Austin & Lindsey Claeys, BDC Financial Services, Benton & Carolyn Visser, Bradley Carlson, Brandon & Taylor Stanley, Daniel & Jamie Kohler, Dennis & Florence Miller, Jonathan & Emma Jungemann, Keith & Imogene Brasch, Kelsey Andrews, Kristin Harm, Martha Gesick, Paul & Patricia Penn, Richard & Louise Wieman, Rick & Melody Underberg, Tonee & Sam Cramer, United Way

## Supporter: Contributions up to \$999

Carol Wieman, Elizabeth Wallace & Christopher Scislowicz, Great Plains Dental

## Provider: Contributions up to \$5,000

American Online Gives, Emmanuel Presbyterian Church, Emmanuel Presbyterian Women, First Church of Monroe, Lloyd Company, Nathan & Mackenzie Palatsky, Tom & Jenna Graber, Vern Eide

## Patron: Contributions up to \$10,000 ++

Shaw family foundation



## THE LEGACY HALL OF HONOR

The Rob Globke Memorial Fund

*Kathleen Tieszen*

By Dr Richard & Karie Tieszen

*Emily Gross*

By Leanna & David Biesheuvel and Rick & Melody Underberg

*Caroline Gross*

By Leanna & David Biesheuvel

*Verna Langerack*

By Leanna & David Biesheuvel and Steve & Marci Albrecht

*Mary Lounsbury*

By Rick Wuertz

*Lucille Preheim*

By Rick Wuertz

*Charyl Fields*

By Coleen Brasch

*Edward Sykora*

By Coleen Brasch and Steve & Marci Albrecht

*Bud & Betty Laerb*

By Coleen Brasch

*Lee Krumbach*

By Steve & Marci Albrecht

*Adeline Vavra*

By Marla Jean Waters

*Sharon Verdugt*

By Marla Jean Waters

*Helen Fawcett*

By Marla Jean Waters

*In Honor of Steve Waters 70th Birthday*

By Brian & Coleen Brasch

*Richard Becker*

By Charles & Cynthia Weber

*Sharon Tulowetzke*

By Rich & Melody Underberg

*Richard & Judy Underberg*

By Rich & Melody Underberg

*Rob Globke*

By Rich & Melody Underberg and Coleen & Family

*Gary Wieman*

By Bernell & Carol Nelson

*Harm Family Members*

By Harm Family

*Mary Lindeman Muchmore*

By David & Patricia Pape

*Dale & Betty Waters*

By Brian & Coleen Brasch Family

