



# Building Forever Families - Adoption & Family Services

Edition #1

October 2019

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## Our Story

Building Forever Families – Adoption & Family Services was founded by adoption advocate, Barb Pearson-Cramer. Barb says, “I have been advocating for adoption since 2000 and have been an adoption caseworker since 2006. I wanted to continue my personal mission of serving families during the adoption process and continue my advocacy work. I believe that every client deserves personal attention before, during and after their adoption.”

Building Forever Families – Adoption & Family Services was founded in March of 2016 when licensing approval in North Dakota was obtained. In April of 2017, licensing approval was obtained in South Dakota. Since the inception, Building Forever Families – Adoption & Family Services has had 25 placements including; two placements in 2016, six placements in 2017, twelve in 2018 and five placements to date in 2019. Our staff has presented adoption information at social work conferences, to medical students and have advocated for adoption in the South Dakota and North Dakota legislatures.

YES! We have been busy. YES! We love what we are doing. So the next big news is that we are currently working on licensing in another state!

## Programs & Services

Building Forever Families – Adoption & Family Services offers the following services for those **Unexpectedly Pregnant**: Options Counseling, Connections to Resources. For those who choose an adoption plan, services include: Coordination of Legal, Medical, Economic Assistance and Hospital.

**Prospective Adoptive Parent** services include: Domestic Infant/Toddler Program, Waiting Child Program, Identified Adoption, Home Study and Supervision Services for Domestic and International Adoption.

Please help us get the word out about all of our services and programs. We would be happy to speak about adoption to other organizations or to your church family. We also train professionals and can speak at an in-service or other training for medical professionals, counselors, social workers and clergy,



***Building Forever Families - Adoption & Family Services Mission:  
To build forever families for children through adoption with support,  
education, and advocacy.***



## Sweet Faces



## Forever Families Adoption Alliance

In 2018, Barb and husband, Trevor, decided that there also needed to be an option for fundraising and providing scholarships to birth families and adoptive families. They founded Forever Families Adoption Alliance, a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization. \$12,000 was raised in 2018 and 4 grants were given that year totaling \$11,000. The grants were awarded to families in need of financial assistance to complete their adoptions. All 4 situations were where the children had special needs. In 2019, one grant has been awarded in the amount of \$500. This grant was for medical care that was not covered by any insurance.

## Our Current Financial Need – Goal

Our goal for 2019 is fundraising \$50,000. We currently have two cases where families need financial assistance in order to cover the expenses of the adoptions and one case where the child needs medical care that is not covered. PLEASE consider a donation and help us reach our goal.

**To make a tax deductible contribution:  
Forever Families Adoption Alliance  
PO Box 507, Faulkton SD 57438**



## Special Fundraiser

Henry, the adopted son of one of our ND Board Members, Kimberly Halverson, held a book fundraiser for the agency. The total of the fundraiser was over \$600 of Usborne books including copies of "Babies Come From Airports" an adoption story and Meditative Coloring Books for Teens. The books are given out to our families at the time of their adoption. Thank you, Henry! BobBobBob (what Henry calls Barb) and all of us at Building Forever Families appreciate your kind heart!



## Staff

Building Forever Families – Adoption & Family Services Staff has over 60 years of combined adoption experience. All staff members have adoption connections. We team up to make the adoption process as smooth as possible for all parties.

**Carolyn Henderson**, has been working in the field of mental health since 1999. . .she loves listening to people and assisting them in figuring out what their strengths are. She states that problem solving can be challenging but rewarding at times. She has been with Building Forever Families since the beginning, first as a board member, and now in her role as the ND Social Work Supervisor. Carolyn states, "It's so enjoyable working with families, and both sides of the adoption equation!" She also states that she learns from every case. Carolyn is most proud of her family and states that some of her best friends are her children. She and husband, James, feel that they now have 8 kids with their children's spouses. They enjoy their 13 grandchildren as well as 1 great-grandchild. When Carolyn was a child, she thought she was going to be a writer. She loved to write poems.

**Ellen Stevens** is a single parent to six adopted children ages 13 to 29. She has one adorable 20-month-old granddaughter. Also joining her family are one big orange dog, five cats, and a tortoise. Her education includes a BA in Public Administration, and a Master's in Social Work. Ellen has vast experience in human services and therapy, but one of Ellen's favorite jobs is being a mom and grandma. Ellen states her best qualities have developed over 20 years as an adoptive, foster and respite parent. She states she is a problem solver and a Big Picture Thinker ("Will this be important 50 years from now?"). Ellen's favorite time of day is between 4 and 6 am, when many of life's problems can be solved, because it's quiet. Her favorite place in South Dakota is Reptile Gardens. Ellen joined Building Forever Families as the SD Social Work Supervisor in 2017.

**Kim Carlbom** is an adoptive parent of an 8 year old daughter and a 10 year old son. She and her husband live on a ranch in the middle of the South Dakota Badlands. Her children are her pride and joy and she spends her spare time following them all over the state for wrestling tournaments, football games, cheerleading or gymnastics. Growing up in Denver, Kim was destined to move to a small town and go to college. It was there that she knew she wanted to live in the country. Kim has worked in the counseling field for a number of years. She is no stranger to the Adoption field as she has worked with both Barb and Carolyn before. Kim states that joining Building Forever Families in 2019 as the administrative assistant has been so wonderful and empowering. Seeing the lives of families change is very rewarding. At one point in Kim's life she was training to go to the Olympics in the shot put, but due to a career ending injury, her life went in another direction.

**Barb Pearson-Cramer** is the mom of 4 children. She and her husband live on an acreage near Faulkton, SD. Barb is the agency's Executive Director and founder. When not working, she is busy attending her children's activities. In her spare time, Barb likes working in her gardens and sewing/crafts. Barb states a fun fact about her is that she would rather clean the barn than clean the house.



## Acts of Excellence

In April, Building Forever Families - Adoption & Family Services was honored by the South Dakota Hall of Fame for **Acts of Excellence**. The agency was nominated and awarded this honor because of the "personalized adoptions" as a standard of practice for the agency. Joining Barb for the recognition was her family (pictured left) and many members of the Faulkton, SD community. We were blessed to receive this recognition and meet many other Acts of Excellence Honorees.



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