



## a newsletter for Adoptive Parents of Color

### Contents

Tell Us What You  
Need

Our Programs

Meet Malaika  
Parker, APCC  
Director

Meet Our Steering  
Committee

Parent to Parent  
Wisdom Corner

### Introducing The Adoptive Parents of Color Collaborative



The Adoptive Parents of Color Collaborative (APCC) a project of Pact, an adoption alliance, that is working to uplift the voices, values, and experience of adoptive parents of color.

Although people of color are adopting and fostering at a higher rate (per capita) than White families, very little support exists that reflects the experiences of adoptive families headed by people of color. We want to change that! APCC is a community of and for people of color.

We serve children by supporting the families and communities in which they grow and thrive. By centering our work on the child, we are directly challenging the adoption “industry’s” hyper-focus on the needs and comfort of the adoptive parents, often

at the risk of not meeting the needs of the child. By supporting, pushing, and building community for our families we are shifting a narrative with and for adoptees who are being parented by adoptive parents of color.

We aim to provide a space for adoptive parents of color to build community, receive and provide peer support, and participate in educational activities with other families that reflect their experiences within adoption. Children and families thrive when they are part of a larger community that reflects their unique experiences. Talking about adoption, birth families, and loss is critical to the well-being of adopted children, yet there are very few resources that specifically support the experiences of parents of color and their children. The limited mention of adoptive parents of color often relegates them to a secondary position relative

to white transracial adopters. In conversations about transracial adoption, the answer to many questions is “well, if that child was with a family of color...,” as if same-race adoptive families don’t face any challenges. Or families of color are framed as doing some kind of charity work, encouraged to “step up for children of color.” The dominant culture of adoption is one that supports and uplifts the stories of White parents who are parenting across racial lines. This narrative perpetuates the idea of a white savior while pivoting the majority of support and resources to those white transracial parents. In reality, the majority of adoptive/foster/kinship placements are with people of color. Lack of acknowledgement of this reality leaves adoptive parents of color without community as well as vital and specific opportunities for relevant education.

Over the next year we are launching exciting programs and projects to deepen the discussion, grow the community, and provide opportunities for support and education. We aim to center the discussions on the experiences of people of color throughout their adoptive parenting journey.

Read on, and join us!

## Stay in touch!

[Follow us on facebook](#) | [Follow our Blog](#) | [Follow us on Instagram](#)

[Make a Tax Deductible Donation](#)

## Tell Us What You Need



We want to hear more about the experiences and needs of people of color parenting or considering parenting through adoption. The more of you who complete this survey, the better chance we have of increasing our funding and therefore our ability to serve your families. Take the survey today and let us know what kind of support you need and want.

[\*\*If you are an adoptive parent of color, please complete our survey here.\*\*](#)

## Our Programs

### Yes! We Do Adopt

This is an online/social media campaign highlighting the stories of people of color connected to adoption through writings, research, poetry, pictures and papers. Help us raise the narrative that people of color do adopt and highlight that adoption is a beautiful, complicated journey.



## Get Involved today!

**Share your images** We are looking for beautiful casual and formal shots of your families. Have some you want to share?

**Share your words** We want to hear your voices. We are looking for people of color touched by adoption to write for our blog highlighting parenting, adoption, race, racism.

**Spread the word** Tag your posts  
**#yeswedoadopt**

Send submissions to [apcc@pactadopt.org](mailto:apcc@pactadopt.org)

## Speakers Bureau

We are recruiting parents of color who are interested in speaking in their community on the topic of adoptive parenting. Through community presentations we will recruit new adoptive parents of color, provide an opportunity to educate the wider community about adoption, and inform people who have already adopted about the community that exists.

**Share your story** Are you interested in talking to your community about adoption? We have trainings, stipends, and support available for you. Apply to become a member of our speakers bureau by [completing this form](#).

**Spread the word** Do you know a place or group that would welcome a presentation about people of color and adoption? Help us build our outreach list by sending suggestions to [apcc@pactadopt.org](mailto:apcc@pactadopt.org).



## Village Connect

We are providing technical support and funding for groups throughout the nation run by adoptive parents of color. By growing this community we are creating sustainable, locally-grown networks of families who are building support for one another.

**We are excited to support the following groups:**

**Adoptive Parents of Color Mindfulness Parenting** - Class is Full

**The Village Adoptive Parents of Color Support Group** - Meets monthly in Oakland, for more information click [here](#)

**Adoptive Dad's Group** - Starting in 2019, for more information click [here](#)

**New York City Group** - Starting in 2019, for more information click [here](#)

**Interested in starting a group in your area?** [Fill out the form here](#)



An annual convening highlighting the experiences of adoptive parents of color. Adult programming focuses on topics such as adoption, parenting, race and child development. Simultaneous youth programming provides age-appropriate activities designed to support exploration of topics like pride, identity, adoption and justice.

**SAVE THE DATE FOR 2019!!!  
NOVEMBER 16, 2019**

## Meet Malaika Parker, APCC Director



Malaika Parker (left) 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.

We are delighted to announce that Malaika has been selected as one of the first **Class of 2020 Women of Color LeadStrong Fellowship**. **We are so proud of her, check it out!**

## Meet Our Steering Committee

The work of APCC is inspired and supported by an amazing community of dedicated members of the Pact community. Without their work and dedication our work would not be possible! The Steering Committee works alongside Pact's Program Director, Malaika Parker, to imagine, create, and evaluate possibilities for work supporting people of color touched by adoption. Check out the current members (pictured with their family and/or children) and [click here](#) if you are interested in joining the committee. We are particularly looking to expand to include members from outside of Northern California.



Raquel Vivanco (left)



Takai Tyler (right)



Nikku Dhesi (right)



David Wilkins (left) & Darolyn Davis (middle)

Marcia Bedford (left)



Roger Daniels (2nd from left)



Elayne Chou (right)



Terry Simon (left)



Justin Wooley (right)



Michael Thompson (middle)

## Parent to Parent Wisdom Corner

### Voices of Experience

#### *from the Adoptive Parents of Color Collective*

**Adoptive parents of color are often told that just being the same race as their child is enough. As adoptive parents ourselves, we know that it takes more than love and racial matching to support our children. We believe that by creating a foundation of trust, honesty, and openness, we can better honor all of who are children are. The following is a collection of thoughts from adoptive parents of color on how to support our children.**

- Understand the loss and separation of adoption as trauma.
- Ensure that the adoption story doesn't get lost. Have a clear and intentional way to talk about adoption. The world will not push you in this direction, people may not encourage you to talk, you will have to find your way.
- Be willing to have your child connected to their birth family whenever possible. And

if no contact is possible, then gather as much information as you can about the birth family to be able to talk about them with your child.

- Understand how your child's cultural identity will be supported. As adoptive parents of color, we often share the same racial identity as our children, but that does not mean we have the same cultural histories. Ensure that your child has opportunities to access as much of the specifics as possible of their family of origin's cultural AND racial identity.
- Pay attention to socio-economic differences between your child's adoptive family and first family. Be open and welcoming to your child's first family, regardless of these differences.
- Be open to being stretched. Parenting provides you an opportunity to learn new skills. Be open to who your child is and be pliable enough to shift to what is needed in the moment.
- We have a responsibility to show our kids what it means to be proud of who we are, be diligent about self-care, and strong in our values about respect for all of the members of our community.
- Adoption is a trauma and it impacts our kids. While there is more to the story of adoption than loss, it is a part of our children's journey. Loss of family, loss of community (even in same-race adoption), loss of identity—these are all significant and are all important pieces of who our children are.
- It is important that we are in community with other adoptive families who are finding ways to support their children in navigating this part of the story.
- Adoptive parents can support their children to heal this trauma, but not “overcome” it.
- Our children are to be celebrated. Adoption is loss but it is also joy. Adoptive families must find the opportunities to balance the loss and the joy of adoption. Make lots of time for joy, celebration and play.
- Looking alike doesn't make it all okay.
- Infant placement doesn't mean our kids haven't experienced loss.
- Having a community of other children of color who are adopted helps. Have a game plan for building your community. Consider how you will connect with other families headed by people of color who have adopted. Although people of color make up the majority (per capita) of adoptive/foster/kinship placements, there is a severe lack of services offered to meet the specific needs of these families. It may not always be easy to build a community that looks like your family. If there are no services already being provided in your area consider starting a group. Having community is crucial!
- We have to understand that children's behavior is an attempt to communicate thoughts/feelings/experiences they don't have language for, are overwhelmed by, or are afraid to put words to.
- We must model for our child what it means to have strong connections to family by birth and choice. This gives them permission to define family for themselves.
- Understand and discuss with your child the institutional and structural nature of adoption—through economic, political, racial, gender, and historical lenses, among others. It can be meaningful to acknowledge those realities to our children.
- Talk to family members before becoming parents to make sure everyone is on the same page: using correct language as well as refraining from making negative

comments about the child's birth family or talking about how "lucky" the child is, etc.

- Listen to the experiences and expertise of adult adoptees to gain more knowledge and perspective.
  - Listen to the experiences and expertise of first parents to gain more knowledge and perspective.
- 



**Pact, an Adoption Alliance**

[www.pactadopt.org](http://www.pactadopt.org)

5515 Doyle Street, Suite 1  
Emeryville, CA 94608

**510-243-9460**