

DONOR OF THE DAY | By Melanie Grayce West

## Easing the Expense Of Adopting a Child

In a tiny two-room office in the middle of Manhattan, Becky Fawcett is helping people live the dream of parenthood.

Ms. Fawcett's seven-year-old organization, HelpUsAdopt.org, provides grants to parents who need help covering the costs of adoption. The average adoption runs about \$30,000, but that calculation includes relatively simple adoptions between relatives and close relations, said Ms. Fawcett. More likely, an adoption costs around \$40,000, she said.

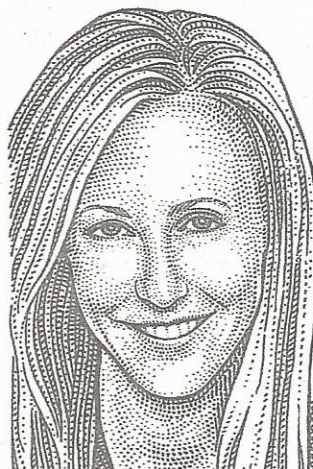
In June, HelpUsAdopt.org provided \$150,000 in grants to help 16 families adopt. By the end of this year, the organization will hit \$1 million in grants to more than 100 families. Each grant is around \$7,500.

Out of the 107 families that have received a grant from Ms. Fawcett's group, all but three adoptions have been completed. Ms. Fawcett accepts that there is some risk when helping a family navigate the adoption process, but "when we lose, I need like a gallon of Maalox."

The idea to be on the side of the parent was born from Ms. Fawcett's experience with infertility and adoption. She and her husband, Kipp Fawcett, were married in 1996. The couple went through several rounds of failed in-vitro fertilization before pursuing adoption in 2005.

They finalized the adoption of their son, Jake, in October 2006. A daughter, Brooke, was adopted in 2009. The fertility treatments and adoption costs were almost \$200,000, said Ms. Fawcett. "Our blessing is that we had this money to spend."

The main reason adoption is so expensive is that "no one pays for anything except the adoptive parents," said Ms. Fawcett. Costs could include: the parents' lawyer and social worker, the adoptive mother's lawyer and social worker, an adoption agency, advertising in



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local newspapers to attract a mother, a home study, medical or living expenses for the mother, travel and lodging. If a child is adopted outside of the U.S., there is often a country and orphanage fee paid, said Ms. Fawcett.

The government does provide a tax credit to parents after an adoption is finalized, said Ms. Fawcett, but that credit doesn't help a family "get to the finish line." It's during that final stage of the process where she steps in with a donation.

HelpUsAdopt.org receives about 1,000 applications a year. Unlike other organizations that have a religious affiliation or support the adoption of children from a particular country, Ms. Fawcett's group supports any type of adoption and welcomes any family. Her clients have included schoolteachers, social workers, clergy members, a truck driver and a wedding photographer.

"Good, solid people," is how Ms. Fawcett describes the would-be parents who contact her. "They are doing absolutely everything within their power to become parents through adoption."