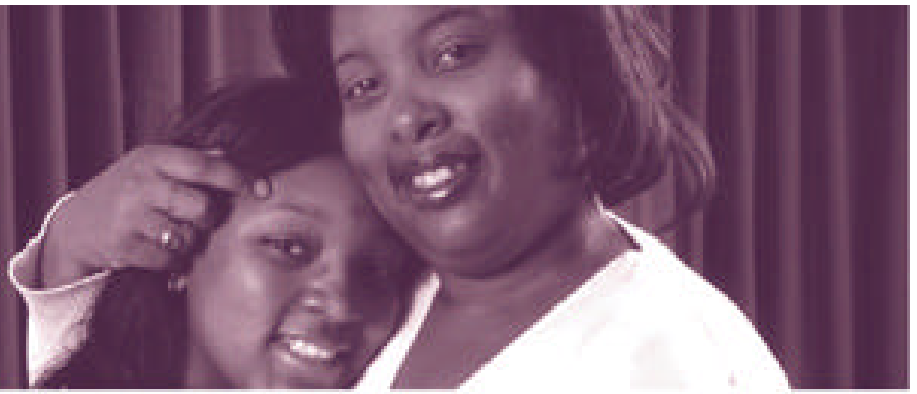


*A Desire to*  
**LOVE**

*A Reason to*  
**ADOPT**



## **Give An Older African-American Child A Family**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Robert E. Blount Jr.  
Sahara Communications Inc.  
(410) 576-7245, ext. 201  
rblount@saharainc.net

### **PROJECT IF NOT US S P E A K E R S B U R E A U**

#### **CAMPAIGN SPOKESPERSON**

**SABRENA MCALLISTER** – Sabrena is the Director of Project “If Not Us.” Project “If Not Us” is dedicated to finding adoptive homes for older African-American children currently residing in the foster care system in the National Capital region. Project “If Not Us” is an initiative of Adoptions Together, a private, nonprofit child placement agency licensed by the State of Maryland and District of Columbia. Sabrena is the campaign spokesperson for Project “If Not Us” and has over 10 years of marketing and child welfare experience. Prior to working at Adoptions Together, she served as the Communications Marketing Manager, with a focus on Foster Parent Recruitment, with the Northern Virginia Family Service. Other child welfare experience includes Volunteers of America and The Uptown Inner City League. Sabrena received her BA in Political Science in 1996 from Bloomfield College in New Jersey. She is the mother of one son and is actively involved in the community. Sabrena is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. and resides in Prince Georges County. Sabrena has the ability to discuss issues about adoption ranging from recruitment efforts to local and national statistics on the adoption of older African-American children.

#### **SPEAKERS BUREAU MEMBERS**

**HOPE BANKETT** - Hope is the mother of two children ages 5 months and 3 years and is a manager for a large insurance company. Hope became an adoptive parent after years of struggling with infertility. She realized that the path chosen for her and her husband was different. They immediately thought of adoption and realized that they could provide a child all the love and care that child would need. She also realized that based on her blessings, she could make a difference in a child's life in the direction they were headed. On January 12, 2001, Kendall came home with the Bankett's at the age of 2 1/2 weeks. Since that time, Hope, especially, has been an advocate for the adoption of African-American children, hoping to encourage others to make a difference in a child's life as well. Hope is actively involved in her church serving on a board that governs the Pastor relations with the members. She is also a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and attended Towson University where she received her BS degree. Hope can share her experience as an adoptive parent of an infant African-American child.



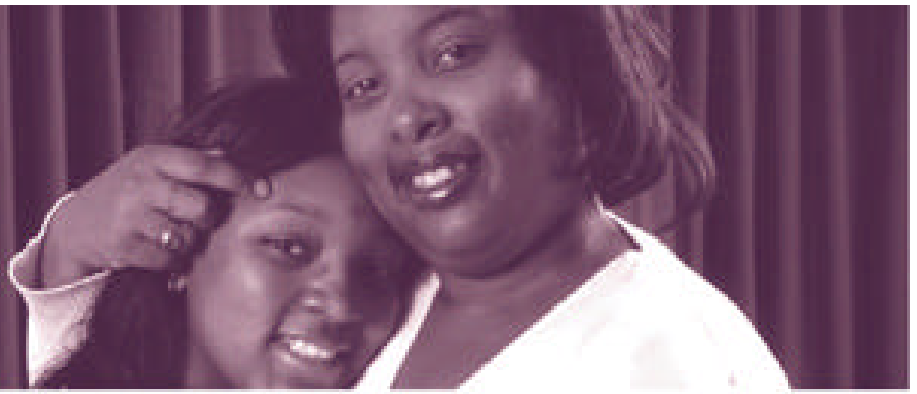
Adoptions Together • Project “If Not Us”  
10230 New Hampshire Avenue Suite 200  
Silver Spring, MD 20903  
Tel: (301) 439-2900 • Fax: (301) 439-9334  
Email: IfNotUs@adoptionstogether.org

This publication was made possible by grant number 90-C0-0967 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Project “If Not Us” • (301) 439-2900 • [www.AdoptionsTogether.org](http://www.AdoptionsTogether.org)

*A Desire to*  
**LOVE**

*A Reason to*  
**ADOPT**



## Give An Older African-American Child A Family

**ANTHONY G. BROWN** – Del. Brown is married to Patricia Arzuaga. They are the proud parents of a daughter, Rebecca, and son, Jonathan. They adopted Jonathan through Adoptions Together on August of 2000. Del. Brown has been a member of the Maryland House of Delegates since January 13, 1999 (Democrat, District 25, Prince George's County) and serves as the Vice Chairman of the Judiciary Committee. Del. Brown is also a member of Adoptions Together, Inc., Board of Directors, 2001. Other affiliations include: National Conference of State Legislatures' Committee on Children, Families and Health, 1999. Member, Board of Trustees, Prince George's Community College, 1995-98 (Chairman, 1997-98); County Executive's Welfare-To-Work Advisory Panel, Prince George's County, 1997-98. Member, Business and Technology Division Task Force, 2000. Born in Huntington, New York, November 21, 1961. Harvard University, A.B. (government), 1984. Aviation Officer (captain), U.S. Army (active & reserve), 1984-94. Harvard University Law School, J.D., 1992. Del. Brown can discuss Maryland legislative issues surrounding adoption, as well as speak about his experience as an adoptive parent.

**KAMILAH BUNN** – Kamilah is the Family Recruitment Specialist for Project "If Not Us," an initiative dedicated to finding adoptive homes for older African-American children residing in the foster care system. As Family Recruitment Specialist, she was responsible for the formation and launch of the Project "If Not Us" recruitment campaign and is currently implementing the plan to recruit 40+ African-American families in the greater Washington, DC area by October 2005. Kamilah received her BS/BA in marketing from the University of Pittsburgh and immediately began her career in public relations. As an avid lover of the arts, Kamilah searched and found a non-profit organization, which combined both her professional training and artistic skills. Soon she relocated to Washington, DC and began her professional career as Marketing and Public Relations director for Dance Place in northeast, DC. Kamilah has also worked with "at-risk" youth in the DC public schools system as a mentor/dance instructor for DARE Dance America – a program that offers the arts as a healthy alternative to violence and drug abuse. While her professional scope has broadened to advocate for older children in the foster care system, Kamilah's passion for youth is the same. Kamilah knows the current statistical data and the campaign's recruitment efforts planned to find homes for older African-American children.

**COREY A. JENNINGS, ESQ.** – Corey Jennings, along with two others, founded the FLOW Entertainment Group LLC and the FLOW Foundation. The FLOW Foundation was created as a vehicle to foster positive energy to better and uplift the urban community. He received his BA degree from Oberlin College, his MA degree from the University of Chicago, and his JD degree from the University of Virginia. After receiving his master's degree, Corey accepted an appointment as a Governor's Policy Fellow, a two-year post-graduate program that brings the nation's most distinguished policy graduates to serve the Maryland State Government. In addition to his commitments at the FLOW Foundation, Corey currently practices corporate and securities law. He is very active in the community and is a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. Corey's expertise is on galvanizing public awareness in the African American community.



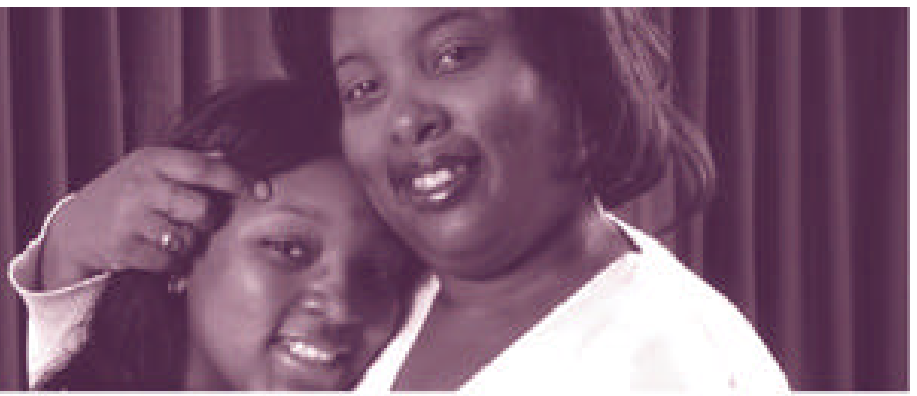
Adoptions Together • Project "If Not Us"  
10230 New Hampshire Avenue Suite 200  
Silver Spring, MD 20903  
Tel: (301) 439-2900 • Fax: (301) 439-9334  
Email: IfNotUs@adoptionstogether.org

This publication was made possible by grant number 90-CO-0967 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Project "If Not Us" • (301) 439-2900 • [www.AdoptionsTogether.org](http://www.AdoptionsTogether.org)

A Desire to  
**LOVE**

A Reason to  
**ADOPT**



## Give An Older African-American Child A Family

**DR. SYBIL GRAY** - Dr. Sybil Smith-Gray is a clinical psychologist who specializes in pediatric and adolescent psychology. She helps families cope with very young children exhibiting developmental delays and attachment/bonding issues. She is also an expert on severe disruptive and delinquent adolescent behavior. She is married and a mother of three children, a son age 9, and two daughters ages 6 and 7. The girls are siblings and they were adopted when they were 3 and 4 years old. Dr. Gray characterizes her adoption experience as "the kind of wonderful experience that all adoptive parents fantasize they are going to have." Dr. Gray can speak about her satisfying experience as an adoptive parent as well as give a child psychologist perspective on children's psychological needs.

**RITA SIMONS** - Rita J. Simon is a sociologist who earned her doctorate at the University of Chicago in 1957. Before coming to American University in 1983 to serve as Dean of the School of Justice, she was a member of the faculty at the University of Illinois, at the Hebrew University on Jerusalem, and the University of Chicago. She is currently a "University Professor" in the School of Public Affairs and the Washington College of Law at American University. Professor Simon has authored 30 books and edited numerous others. She is currently editor of *Gender Issues*. From 1978 to 1981, she served as editor of *The American Sociological Review* and from 1983 to 1986 as editor of *Justice Quarterly*. In 1966, she received a Guggenheim Fellowship. Since 1993, Professor Simon has served as President of the Women's Freedom Network. Professor Simon is an expert on adoption issues, with an emphasis on trans-racial adoption.

**CALVIN SPIGNER** - Calvin Spigner's experience with youth is extensive. One of his earliest jobs was as a Youth Counselor in his hometown of Orangeburg, South Carolina. Then, while serving in the US Air Force in Germany, he coached an international youth basketball team and also served as a youth counselor in his off-duty time. After leaving the Air Force he settled in Fayetteville, North Carolina, where he organized activities and served as a Big Brother and mentor to youth, especially young men, while working for the YMCA. In 1989, Calvin began working for the government and moved to Fort Washington, MD. It was here that he realized he had been truly called to ministry. He became president and spiritual leader of a young adult choir and organized young men's fellowships and retreats. Calvin's passion for improving the lives of young men did not stop there. It finally occurred to him that a natural next step for him would be adoption. Calvin is a happy and proud father of three teenaged adopted boys. The Spigner family resides in Fort Washington, Maryland. Calvin can speak about the joys and challenges of his experience as an adoptive parent, with a focus on adopting teenage African-American boys.



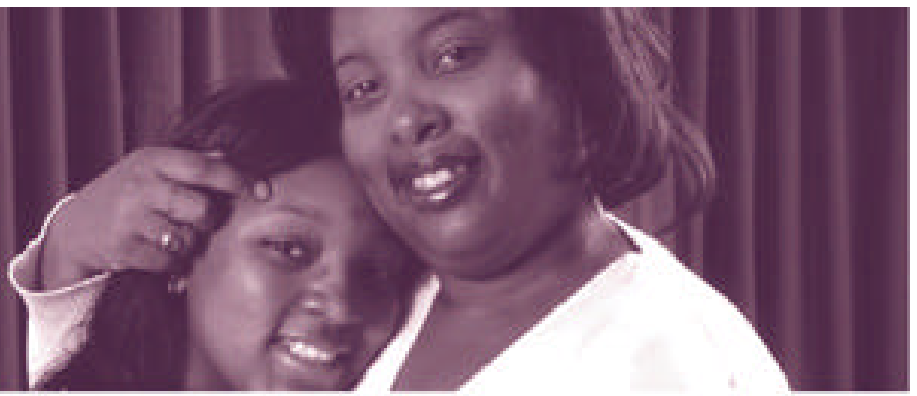
Adoptions Together • Project "If Not Us"  
10230 New Hampshire Avenue Suite 200  
Silver Spring, MD 20903  
Tel: (301) 439-2900 • Fax: (301) 439-9334  
Email: IfNotUs@adoptionstogether.org

This publication was made possible by grant number 90-C0-0967 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Project "If Not Us" • (301) 439-2900 • [www.AdoptionsTogether.org](http://www.AdoptionsTogether.org)

*A Desire to*  
**LOVE**

*A Reason to*  
**ADOPT**



## **Give An Older African-American Child A Family**

**MARCEL SPIGNER** - Marcel Jermaine Spigner is age 19. He is the adopted son of Calvin Spigner. Born in Washington, D.C., Marcel has experienced what it is like to be in the foster care system for the majority of his teenage years. Marcel is currently attending Prince George's Community College. Marcel can talk about his experience being in the foster care system, being adopted, and what it is like to have two brothers who are also adopted.

**VANITA M. TAYLOR** – Vanita and her husband, John E. Owens, are the proud parents of four children ranging in age from 22 to 4 years old: Aleta Taylor - Owens age 24; Omar Taylor-Owens age 19; step daughter Jillian Owens 22; and her niece, Yasmeen Owens, age 9. Vanita and John also assist when needed with the care of their 31-year-old niece Ulum Owens, who has lupus. Vanita's household is a snap shot of today's new family structure, which may often include an adopted child. Vanita was born in Atlantic City, N. J. She received her undergraduate education from Cornell University and attended law school at New York University. Vanita can discuss adoption policy and law issues.

# # #



Adoptions Together • Project "If Not Us"  
10230 New Hampshire Avenue Suite 200  
Silver Spring, MD 20903  
Tel: (301) 439-2900 • Fax: (301) 439-9334  
Email: IfNotUs@adoptionstogether.org

This publication was made possible by grant number 90-C0-0967 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Project "If Not Us" • (301) 439-2900 • [www.AdoptionsTogether.org](http://www.AdoptionsTogether.org)