

# NEWSLETTER



SPRING 2020

## A Message from our Co-Founder and CEO

Hello, friends.

As everyone is well aware, we are currently facing a trying time in our country and around the world. While the safety, security and well being of our families and friends are priorities, this is also an opportunity to come together as a community on a local, national and global level.

DNAngels is an organization committed to providing each client with our DNA mapping, interpretation and research services. This commitment to clients is more steadfast than ever now, when kindness, love and support of everyone is so important.

Please remember: We operate exclusively on a remote basis, which means that we anticipate very little interruption of the services we provide each of our clients who seek information about their individual identity and biological history.

Stay positive, healthy and safe.

Laura Leslie  
Co-Founder and CEO  
DNAngels

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## A BIG Thank You!

Here are a few recent DNAngels milestones and acknowledgements worth recognition:

- Many heartfelt thanks to our staff of dedicated volunteers who donate their time and expertise to our cause.
- We now have nine fully trained **Angels**, all of whom volunteer their time and effort to solving client cases, as time permits. Thank you for all you do, Angels!
- Special gratitude goes to **Bruce Scott**, a DNAngels client and friend, who volunteers his time and graphic design skills to our organization, including our new logo. Thank you, Bruce!
- Much appreciation goes to our **Intake Specialists**, all of whom put in countless hours screening candidates and submitting cases to us with great efficiency.
- We are pleased to announce the addition of the **DNAngels Ambassadors Club**, a group of volunteers dedicated to spreading the word about our work, how we can help those in need of our services, and the impact we continue to have on many people's lives.
- A special thanks goes to everyone who has welcomed new members to our support group and to anyone who has shared their story. Your contributions further our outreach efforts, while inspiring those who read your impactful stories.



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## Updates, News & Announcements

We have some exciting news and announcements to share!

- **New cases solved** in 2020: **164**
- **New cases taken** on in 2020: **188**
- **RootsTech Conference:** Three of our **Angels** - Emily Ripper, Kayla Branch and Ashely Frazier - recently attended **RootsTech**, an annual conference in Salt Lake City that offers many learning opportunities in the genealogical community. This was an amazing experience for our Angels, all of whom came back with valuable insight into cutting-edge technology, while also establishing great contacts and resources in all areas of genealogy research and development.



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## Lee's Story

*This story is an especially impactful journey of one woman in search of her true identity. We are sharing her story now as a reminder of the difficult and life-altering journey many people experience when seeking information about their biological history. The following is edited for length.*

Social media can be a wonderful tool, if used properly. In my case, it helped me reconnect with cousins I hadn't spoken to in 25 or 30 years.

I never felt close to my mother. She always made me feel like second-best. You see, I had a brother named Donald who, at the age of five, died from Lymphatic cancer. I was compared to him my whole life. He was the ghost with whom I had to live.

As for my father, he died when I was three years old and my mother remarried. I could not ask for a better stepdad. He loved me and I absolutely worshipped him. He made my life somewhat tolerable and kept me safe from the physical and mental abuse of my mother.

My mother died in 2007. I was left to take care of my stepdad for the next five years until his passing in 2012.



While vacationing in Florida, I met with four of my cousins for lunch. We had a great lunch but then I looked at them and realized we looked nothing alike. That's when I felt sick, like my throat was closing. I could hardly breathe and my heart was pounding. I realized and they verified that I was adopted. No one had ever actually told me. Assuming I had always known, my cousins laughed while I felt both nauseated and relieved.

Armed with this information and still interested in learning what I could, I traveled to Puerto Rico to visit my mother's only living sibling, her sister. My aunt told me her version of how my adoption transpired.

Prior to this long-term search for answers, I always questioned why people would do DNA searches, if they didn't want to share information, but have since learned why. Here I had all these DNA results, not understanding one thing that I was reading except for possible matches and names that meant nothing to me. I felt hopeless. I didn't think I would ever get the information I needed. I knew there was more to the story than what I had been told. I was at a dead end and it was over!

Then last month, while scrolling through Facebook, I came across DNAngels, a resource who could help me in my journey. Things soon changed for me and with much expedience. I had the honor of working with Laura Leslie, Victoria, Ashley Frazier and Leslie Irizarry. Within one hour, they located my nieces from whom I discovered my six brothers and three sisters. Of my siblings, I learned that I had one full brother and one full sister.

So I finally had a name, siblings and parents. I finally had the truth as told by my newly discovered sisters. My mother took me to the local town doctor because I had a skin condition. She already had two other children at the time and could not afford to have my condition treated. I guess it was just a common practice back then, but the doctor offered to take and raise me. My mother agreed but asked the doctor to not change my name. He agreed.

My older sister tells me that my mother never got over having to give me away, which is why they had been looking for me. Unfortunately, because of the unkept promise not to change my name, they could never locate me. Apparently that the doctor gave me to the "grandfather" I thought was my family, who, in turn, did give me to his daughter, the woman I always believed was my mother. Unfortunately, she *did* change my name making it impossible for my biological family to find me.

At 67 years of age, I finally have my biological family. I finally have siblings, parents, a name, but more importantly, an identity. I can now die at peace knowing the truth.

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## How You Can Help

There are many ways that you can help DNAngels provide much-needed services to those seeking answers to who they are. Everyone deserves to know who they are and from where they came. Our ultimate goal is to continue providing our services to clients at no cost, while trying to meet the ever-increasing demands for service.

Your support of DNAngels goes directly to our service to clients, all of whom deserve to know and understand their unique biological history.

**Our fundraising goal for 2020 is \$225,000.** This funding will allow us to meet the increasing demand for our services from clients seeking information about their biological identity **at no cost to the client.** This funding will

cover the cost of adding a small staff of salaried genetic genealogists to our organization, whose sole responsibility will be to solve cases, either on a full- or part-time basis.

This annual fundraising goal will also provide funds to cover the cost of the following:



- Continuing education of staff and volunteers
- DNA test kits
- Administrative expenses, e.g., office supplies, equipment and subscription renewals

We are aggressively seeking funding from private donors and corporations, as well as individuals who share our passion for helping to uncover biological data to clients seeking this information about their personal identity. **Everyone deserves to know who they are and where they come from.**

**There are many ways for you to support our organization. Please help us help our clients in their biological journey.**

**Monetary Support:** DNAngels is always in need of funding to support our work. Your generous gift will go towards our efforts to provide answers to clients seeking their biological information. From staffing our investigative team of Angels to maintaining a supply of DNA test kits, your financial contributions are needed for us to continue our work, be it for general operating or a specific area of our organization. You may donate via PayPal using the email [donations@dnangels.org](mailto:donations@dnangels.org) or you may send a check to:

DNAngels  
5920 Giant City Road, Unit A  
Carbondale, IL 62902

**Matching Gifts:** Double the impact of your gift by donating through your employer's matching gift program. Please check with your employer to see if they offer a matching gifts program. Please contact us for more information on establishing a matching gift program at [info@dnangels.org](mailto:info@dnangels.org).

**In-Kind Donations:** Our growing organization is always in need of everything from office supplies to DNA kit donations and more. Please contact us for more information on our in-kind donation needs at [info@dnangels.org](mailto:info@dnangels.org).

**Please help us in our efforts to continue providing clients with life-changing information and support.**