

HAND IN HAND INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS

December, 2009

COUNTRY UPDATES

China – The China Center of Adoption Affairs has most recently matched families with log-in dates of March 28, 2006. (We can report on where the China Center of Adoption Affairs is at in terms of their most recent matches, but we cannot accurately predict if that timeline will hold true for future families. Our long history in helping with China adoptions has shown the timelines to fluctuate greatly and often unpredictably. However, if you keep watching this newsletter, you can see if there is any speedup or slowdown in the process from month to month.)

China/Special Needs - We can assist with adoption of children from China who have special needs. This process is an expedited one open to families already in process in China or families yet to apply. Recently matched or placed children have had conditions such as: corrected cleft lip and palate, corrected heart condition, missing limb, delayed motor development, crossed eyes, hernia, hand deformity, operated hemangioma – all conditions which are readily treatable in the US. Would a child like one of these be right for your family?

Guatemala - Word is out that four countries have been approved to begin a pilot program with Guatemala under the new Hague procedures. We do not yet know if the United States is one of those countries, but stay tuned to our website and newsletters for updates as they become available!

Haiti –Haiti is the poorest nation in the western hemisphere. People are literally starving to death (every hour, one child in Haiti dies of starvation) and living in conditions unfathomable to us. Roughly one-third of Haitian children are chronically malnourished. Less than 10 percent of the Haitian population has access to electricity. There is no government infrastructure and very little hope. There are one million orphans in Haiti, but only 200 to 300 are adopted each year by Americans. Could you adopt one of these needy children?

Pakistan – Hand In Hand is currently working to license and register our program for Christian children in Pakistan. We are working toward opening a care facility staffed with nurses and a social worker who will work with the children and relinquishing families. Setting up under a mission group, our facility will be named Abundant Hope Children's Home and will house up to 20 children in need of adoptive homes. We have great needs at this time of donations to assist with the facility and the lease of a car for our coordinator to facilitate the movement of children and adoptive families through the processing of documents. Once the licensing and registration process is completed (hopefully by the end of December), we will begin the work toward processing homeless and relinquished Christian children in the province of Punjab to enter the facility and be eligible for adoptive placement. Continued communication is taking place with the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad to find a way whereby the eligible children's paperwork can be reviewed, investigated and approved PRIOR to a family ever traveling to Pakistan. This hoped for step, will shorten the length of time that a family will need to stay in Pakistan before bringing their child home. Donations to assist with this program should be sent to MaryLee Lane, Hand In Hand, 9520 S.W. 9th Terrace, Ocala, FL 34476 and marked Pakistan Donation.

Philippines –There continues to be a moratorium on applications for children up to two years of age. Applications for children over two are still being accepted. See the article elsewhere regarding the receipt of information on dozens of children for Special Home Find.

Russia – Families are needed for children between 18 months old to ten years old. We have information on new children for special home find. See the article elsewhere in this newsletter.

Motherland Tour 2010

This is the Final Call for any adoptees from the Philippines and their families for the trip of a lifetime to their homeland from June 14 - 28, 2010. We currently have 16 individuals traveling and are working on airline schedules, orphanage visits, and hotels for the group. If you are interested in joining this group of travelers, we can still add up to 12 more, but need to know by no later than Dec. 28th if you would like to go. Costs will be approximately \$2800/person which will include airfares, hotels, entrance fees, ground transportation on our own personal air-conditioned bus, visits to everyone's orphanage, ICAB party, and several meals. If interested in more information, please contact marylee@hihiadopt.org. You will need to reserve your spot with a \$200/person payment.

If you are wondering whether taking a trip to your child's birth country is something better done in a group or on your own, consider these comments from people who took group trips: "All the logistics were taken care of for us;" "We could just be our child's parents and a professional was on hand to help our child deal with the emotions of this journey home;" "The social worker helped us process what we were feeling (parents and children alike);" "The children made friendships we are sure will last a lifetime."

CRY OF THE ORPHAN

November 8, 2009 was Orphan Sunday in the US. Special events were held in churches across the country. A special production by Steven Curtis Chapman called Cry of the Orphan was viewed by thousands. If you missed it, you can still view it by going to www.GospelMusicChannel.com Prepare to be powerfully moved by this message about the 140 million orphans around the world who still wait for the hope of families of their own.

BOOK REVIEW –

SNOWFLAKES - A Flurry of Adoption Stories by, for and about Children and Teens

This book compiled by Teresa Kelleher has over 200 stories – many from adopted children and teens and others from older adoptees and family members of adoptees. It has something for everyone: Children's stories in their own words. Intriguing stories of adoption adventures that will help parents understand the adoption journey. Some are fun, funny, and inspiring. Some are sad. Some present the challenges that kids and families have faced as they have transitioned from orphanages or foster home to their new home and family. There are also blank pages where adoptees can write their own adoption story. Some titles:

My Born Family and My New Family (by an 8-year-old adopted at age 5 from Guatemala)

Losing Friends (by a 12-year-old adopted at age 9 from Kazakhstan)

Fitting In (by a 10-year-old who has physical challenges)

Why Do You Ask? (by an 18-year-old African-American adopted by Caucasian parents)

Conflict (by a 16-year-old adopted from a foster home in the US at age 4)

Adoption Questions (by a 16-year-old adopted as an infant in Korea)

Learning a Language (by a 17-year-old adopted at age 16 from Russia)

"There is something about asking children to write their own feelings and memories that really gets to the heart of it all: no two adoptions are the same. These stories will be interesting and therapeutic for adopted kids who are still working through their feelings. Good stuff!"- Scott Flake, School Psychologist

“There has been much time, care, and love put into this book. It will help others understand the journey of adoption.” -Ashley, age 18 (adopted from foster care at age 12)

“This collection is truly valuable, and will be useful to a wide range of people. The last section about difficult times is very important so that families can understand that there may be bumps along the road. It’s a pleasure to read stories written by adopted children and teens and to be able to visualize the wonderful families who have made a positive difference in their lives. The book is excellent reading for adoption staff and is very insightful for families and prospective adoptive parents!” -MaryLee Lane, Founder of Hand in Hand Adoptions

Order this book by emailing the author at tk.pacifica@gmail.com or by visiting <http://WorkNotes.com/AZ/AdoptingFromRussia/Kelleher>. Also available on Amazon.com

CHINA TRAVEL INFORMATION

www.weninchina.com has added three new articles adoptive families can benefit from:

["Essential Mandarin Phrases"](#) has words and sentences that adoptive families are most likely to use in a handy one-page fold-up sheet for fast reference.

["Characters you'll get to know"](#) introduces over two dozen common words, especially those found in the adoption process, directions, and food.

["Tips on tipping"](#) talks about how expectations are changing in China - the old advice of no tipping, or handing out US money doesn't apply - and offer situations where it is and isn't appropriate or necessary.

FREE ADVICE/EDUCATION FOR BECOMING YOUR CHILD'S BEST ADVOCATE

In honor of National Adoption Month, Adoption Learning Partners, an on-line adoption education provider, is offering ["Becoming Your Child's Best Advocate"](#) free. For post-adoption families struggling with schools and other providers to gain appropriate services for kids, this may be a useful resource. Visit www.adoptionlearningpartners.org

GOD BLESS THE CHILDREN – A You Tube song debut

A dad of 3 boys (2 adopted, 1 foster) musician Wayne Warner lives in Vermont, but his work is based in Nashville as a recording artist. He and many of his friends (The Statler Brothers, Taylor Swift etc.) developed a lovely song and video called ["God Bless the Children"](#) which is available on You Tube.

FORT WAYNE FILIPINO-AMERICAN SOCIETY CHRISTMAS PARTY

Saturday, December 5 – Christmas Party 6 PM at the Franke Park Pavilion on the grounds of the Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo – bring a dish to share – there will be special entertainment

UPCOMING HAND IN HAND EVENTS IN INDIANA

Saturday Classes: Day 3 – Saturday, January 23, 2010; Day 4 – Saturday, February 20, 2010. Classes run from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Day 2 – a Saturday to be determined in April, 2010. *The classes do not have to be taken in any certain order. Contact our office if you are not certain whether you have attended all the classes you need.*

Class for Repeat Families: The next class for families working on a second or subsequent adoption will be held in March, 2010.

HOW WILL YOU COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR CHINESE CHILD WHEN YOU MEET HER?

Many families have found this program geared toward language for adoptive families very helpful: www.chineseforparents.com. Here is a special offer from them:

“Vickie, here is what one of our Chinese for Parents members had to say about our program when she returned with her daughter in September:

"It blessed me to pieces when the Mother's song came on and my daughter sang it to me".

We hope our program can bless and equip all China adoption families as they prepare to travel. I want to let you know that we have lowered our price from \$80 to \$60 in order to help families cope with adoption fees. Families can also receive an additional \$5 off by accessing a promotion code. Please have interested families contact me directly at grant@chineseforparents.com to receive the \$55 offer via the promotion code. Families can view program details at www.chineseforparents.com.”

LOVE AND LOGIC

Many of you have read one of the LOVE AND LOGIC books and reported how helpful it was to you in thinking about how to raise responsible children. If you are looking for a day away and learning opportunity combined into one experience, consider attending a LOVE AND LOGIC workshop in Fort Mitchell, KY on January 14, 2010. *Laugh the day away with Jim Fay as you learn: Simple and practical techniques to raise responsible kids; How to get kids to work harder for you than anyone else; How to put an end to backtalk; And much, much more. Register now at www.loveandlogic.com.*

HOLIDAY PARTIES

ARIZONA – Please join our Building Arizona Families partners at a party on Sunday, December 13 from 11:30 AM to 2:30 PM at Encanto Park – Amphitheater Island, 2605 N. 15th Ave., Phoenix. Hot dogs and hamburgers will be served. Bring a dessert to share. Call Angela at 623-695-4043 to RSVP.

INDIANA - The Indiana party will be on Saturday, December 12 from 4-7 PM at Central Noble High School in Albion, Indiana. We will have a carry-in dinner and entertainment. The entertainment will be by adoptive families and children! It's not too late to sign up to entertain. Just give us a call to be added to the program. Please RSVP at 260-636-3566.

GIFT-GIVING THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Are you looking for gift ideas that will both honor and celebrate your child's adoption and heritage, while also benefiting others who are less fortunate? Here are two ideas:

- ADOPTIVE FAMILIES magazine website has an annual gift-giving directory which presents a selection of heritage and adoption products from its sponsors. To see readers' picks for gifts that give back to children's charities, visit their online Gift Guide at www.adoptivefamilies.com.
- LOVE WITHOUT BOUNDARIES has a 2009 Gift Guide called "25 Ways to Change the Life of a Child" which contains a variety of ways to help orphans in China. “This year consider giving your family and friends a gift that will make a world of difference to children in need. Please help us spread the word and share our Gift Guide with family and friends who may wish to purchase a gift in your honor. Donations mailed or received by December 31st are tax deductible in the U.S.” [www.lovewithoutboundaries.com](http://www lovewithoutboundaries.com)

BOY OR GIRL...AND OTHER ADOPTION-RELATED PONDERINGS

"Snips and Snails vs. Sugar and Spice: Gender Preferences in Adoption". Is gender choice a question in your family? If so, check out this article from [Creating a Family](#). [Creating a Family](#) is primarily a radio show and educational resource for adoptive families covering pre and post-adoption issues. The show is the top-rated adoption and infertility podcast on iTunes, and is hosted by Dawn Davenport, the author of *The Complete Book of International Adoption* (Random House). Guests include many well-known names in adoption work and literature. The shows airs every Wednesday from 12:00 to 1:00 Eastern Time and all old shows are available for listening at the radio page of www.creatingafamily.org or can be downloaded as a podcast from iTunes. You will also find timely adoption-related articles such as the one named above.

CHILDREN WHO NEED FAMILIES

We have information on many individual children and sibling groups who need forever families. If you want to see the complete list, contact us at hihiadopt@verizon.net and we will email it to you. Here are just a few of the dozens we received in the past week.

Anastasia is a Caucasian little girl born July, 2008. She has a mild congenital heart defect, convergent squint (eye condition) and partial ptosis (droopy eyelid).

Nicole is a 2-year-old Asian girl with asymmetrical facial features. She is active and playful, though she has some developmental delays.

Nur is an 11-year-old Asian girl with alternating squint (exotropia hypertropia). She undergoes therapy for a limp and also receives special education for mental delays.

Glice is a two-year-old Asian girl born with congenital eye defect (no right eye) and deformities in her fingers and toes. At present, Glice is very responsive and always smiles to her caregivers. She can understand simple instructions. She can feed herself with finger foods and use a spoon with spillage. She attempts to scribble with crayons and turn pages of a book using her fingers. She can walk and run without falling and walks down the stairs two feet on each step with one hand held. She can now say bi-syllable words.

Ohmar – this 12-year-old boy was left by his mother because she could not take him to her family. He has mid-Eastern features, is slim and good looking; he has above average IQ, excels in math, is fond of reading, and dreams of being a pilot.

Jon – this 12-year-old Asian boy has hearing loss (mild in one ear, severe in the other); he has educational delays but is courteous and attentive in school. He likes sports and relates well to his peers; he attends Catholic Church weekly and sometimes plays one of the musical instruments.

John Louie is a three-year-old Asian boy who has suffered malnutrition and has developmental delay; he likes to play with other children, imitates adult actions and is beginning to talk.

Resty is a six-year-old Asian boy voluntarily surrendered by his birth mother who could not provide for his basic needs; he has significant delays in the fine motor, communication, cognitive, adaptive and personal-social domains and a diagnosis of global developmental delay is highly considered. Resty has the initiative in doing his chores. He can attend to his personal needs and hygiene. He relates well with other children but sometimes prefer to play alone.

Carla, Allan and Jennifer – these 11, 10 and 8-year-old siblings were surrendered. Carla is shy, obedient, and has some deficiencies in school, possibly due to early deprivation, but shows interest in learning and has passing grades; Allan is sweet and obedient but has possible mental delay. Jennifer is physically and mentally healthy, sweet and respectful.

John and Jeffrey – these 10 and 8-year-old brothers were relinquished; John is above average in IQ, boisterous, and good at drawing; Jeffrey is playful, neat, gets along with others and has above average IQ

John and Dexter are six and four-year-old brothers who were relinquished; John has developmental delays, but after placement in his foster home, he became more sociable with other children, loves to sing and enjoys imitating movements. He now asks questions about things around him and can carry short conversations. He is described as loving, kind, and obedient by his foster parents. He is also observed to be caring to his younger brother. Dexter is an active and alert child with normal development. He likes to run, jump, climb, and explore his surroundings. He can utter 10-15 words and can identify body parts and members of the foster family. He moves to the tune of the music and plays with other children of the same age.

Two brothers – these are healthy six-year-old Caucasian twins who are described as good boys. They are ready for a family immediately.

ADOPTION TAX CREDIT

If you finalize an adoption during 2009, then you will likely be eligible for an Adoption Tax Credit of \$12,150 when you file your 2009 tax return. Consult your accountant for assistance in accessing this credit.

The bill to prevent this credit from “sundowning” and reverting to its initial \$5000 limit at the end of 2010 appears to be stuck in Congress. If you feel passionately about this, contact your Congressman and ask him/her to support the Adoption Tax Relief Guarantee Act of 2009, HR 213.

GIVING THANKS

With National Adoption Month and Thanksgiving just ending, now is an excellent time for families to consider a year-end tax deductible donation to Hand In Hand. As a non-profit agency, we are the voice for homeless and abandoned children of the world. Through these difficult economic times and natural disasters hitting so many countries, the voices of the children continue to cry out. They beg for their very existence, the most basic of needs, and we, as the most blessed nation and peoples on earth, need to respond. Please answer their cries. Send your year-end tax deductible donations to Hand In Hand, c/o MaryLee Lane, Founder and Director, 9520 S.W. 9th Terrace, Ocala, FL 34476. If there is a particular orphanage or country that you would like your donations sent to, please indicate in the memo section on your check. Blessings, peace and thanks to all of you for your generous help. You will be blessed as you have blessed others!

COULD MY EMPLOYER HELP ME ADOPT?

Many employers offer adoption benefits. Many do not, perhaps because nobody has ever requested them! If yours does not, go to www.adoptivefamilies.com and use their Instant Letter to launch your campaign to convince your employer to offer expense reimbursement and paid leave.

HAND IN HAND IS A HAGUE-ACCREDITED ADOPTION AGENCY

Since February 29, 2008 Hand In Hand has had full accreditation by the US Department of State to perform adoptions under the Hague Convention. This means we are able to assist families

with adoptions from any other country that is a party to the Hague Convention. The purpose of the Hague Convention is to safeguard the rights of children being adopted as well as the rights of the adoptive parents. Being accredited means we have met such standards as education of adoptive parents, professional qualifications and training of staff, ethical practices, maintenance of records, services after an adoption, etc.