

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Laura Feragen  
Toplin & Associates, Inc.  
215-793-4666  
215-287-6259 (after hours)**

### **Angelina Jolie's Adoption Agency Issues Statement**

**WYNNEWOOD, Pa. – March 15, 2007** - Heidi Gonzalez, Vietnam Adoption Coordinator for Adoptions From The Heart, has issued the following response to inquiries regarding Angelina Jolie's adoption from Vietnam.

“In applying to adopt 3-yr-old Pax Thien, Ms. Jolie followed the same course as all prospective adoptive parents who apply to our Vietnam program. Throughout her adoption process, which began in the summer of 2006, she has received no preferential treatment from the Vietnamese government or Adoptions From The Heart, and, contrary to earlier reports, her application was not fast-tracked.

Despite rumors that she chose her child, Ms. Jolie received a referral, just like any other parent adopting from Vietnam. In late 2006, she was referred a child who had been legally determined to be available for adoption and who fit within the parameters for which she had been approved to adopt. She accepted the first and only referral given to her.

In addition, we can confirm the statement given by Nguyen Van Trung, Director of Tam Binh Orphanage, that Ms. Jolie has neither made, nor promised to make, any financial contributions to his orphanage.

Adoptions From The Heart celebrates the miracle of adoption with the Jolie-Pitt family, as we do with all of our clients, and wishes them much joy.”

#### **Background:**

- Adoptions From The Heart (AFTH) is a licensed, non-profit agency offering domestic and international adoption. Based in Wynnewood, Pa., a Philadelphia suburb, the agency has 12 offices, and is licensed in PA, NJ, DE, VA, WV and NY, and approved to place children with families in CT.
- Founded in 1985, by Maxine Chalker, an adoptee herself and former adoption social worker, who serves as executive director. AFTH has earned a reputation for pioneering innovative services to improve the overall adoption process, including being one of the first agencies on the East Coast more than a decade ago to begin offering the option of international adoption - well ahead of the rapidly growing trend. Today, AFTH works with orphanages throughout Asia, Europe and South America.

- AFTH had placed 250 Vietnamese children from 1995 to 2003, when the Vietnamese government closed the program. In April 2006, when Vietnam reopened adoption to the U.S., AFTH received became licensed in Ho Chi Minh City to place children. Since then, 30 families have completed adoptions through AFTH; 22 others are in various stages of the process currently with referrals, and still more are on a waiting list.
- AFTH currently works with four orphanages in Vietnam, including Tam Binh, from which Angelina Jolie adopted.
- AFTH facilitators work directly with the Department of International Adoption (DIA) in Hanoi, the Ministry of Justice and the orphanages to process the required paperwork and help facilitate adoptions through the Vietnamese government. In Vietnam, facilitators escort families to appointments with USCIS (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services), the U.S. Embassy and required doctor visits. They arrange tours and generally accommodate families' needs while they are in Vietnam.
- AFTH has provided ongoing humanitarian aid to the orphanages with which it works, including such current projects as helping to offset daily expenses at Tam Binh orphanage, and funding construction of a new emergency room at Go Vap orphanage, creation of a "milk room" that connects to the infant room at Thi Nghe orphanage, and the purchase of new furniture for the Picasso orphanage.
- Jolie was referred to AFTH by Jane Aronson, MD, a New York-based pediatrician who specializes in adoption medicine and treated Jolie's Ethiopian adopted daughter Zahara.
- Jolie has given Gonzalez and AFTH permission to release details about her son's adoption, which normally is confidential, in order to clarify misconceptions and correct misinformation, surrounding the timeline of events involved in the process.

###