

HoltInternational

FINDING FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

Spring 2008 Vol. 50 No. 2



Annual Report
Eyes on Ethiopia



Ethiopian Adoption

the way opens...

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children from this
African nation**

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Dear Readers

Though Holt's overseas program field staff experience this emotional situation often, it's seldom that Holt U.S. staff sit down, face to face, with a birth family who is in the process of relinquishing their child. That's what Holt President and CEO Gary Gamer did on a recent visit to Holt's newest program in Ethiopia.

When I talked with him about that experience a few days ago, he told me the family's primary concern for the child moved him. Gary was visiting their home in a remote part of south Ethiopia, a two-kilometer walk from the end of a long, dusty road. The young, single mother cradled and fed the little boy, while the grandfather told how he had sought help from his local council to require the baby's birth father to accept some responsibility for his child.

That wasn't to be. Customs and traditions are sometimes hard to understand, but we can all relate to the injustice in the world and how the ultimate victim was this little baby.

The baby's family was facing many serious challenges, including tuberculosis, which had already taken the life of the little boy's grandmother. But despite the family crises, they were mostly concerned with the child's future.

The family had loved, cared for and advocated for this baby. And when Gary visited them, they were making this difficult, emotional decision with the child's best hopes in mind.

We at Holt, and all who support this work, participate in the mission to give orphaned, abandoned and vulnerable children the best chance for a hope and a future—and that's with a permanent, loving family. The story of this family in Ethiopia is a strong reminder of how deep and awesome our responsibility is when we accept a birth family's trust for their child, and when we accept an adoptive family's trust to bring them their son or daughter.

In the best of all possible worlds, that trust will always be in the child's best interest. Life never brings guarantees, and ultimately, we work to do our best, putting our trust in God and seeking His mercy and help.

—John Aeby, Editor

CONTENTS

ANNUAL REPORT

- Summary and Highlights of 2007** 4
Holt President and CEO Gary Gamer notes milestones reached and shares a story about his recent trip to Africa.

A GROWING LIGHT IN ETHIOPIA

- A report from the field** 6
Holt's newest country program faces many needs and challenges, but already the opportunities to help children are looking bright and clear.

ADOPTING

- Abandonment and Loss** 27
How to help your child deal with the fear of abandonment.

DEPARTMENTS

- Update** 10
Around the Globe 12
From the Family 14
Family Tree 16
Waiting Child 24
Adoptees Today 28
Neighborhood Calendar 31



In Ethiopia, February 2008.

HoltInternational

FINDING FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

Spring 2008 vol. 50 no. 2

Holt International Children's Services

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Our Vision

Holt International is dedicated to carrying out God's plan for every child to have a permanent, loving family.

In 1955 Harry and Bertha Holt responded to the conviction that God had called them to help children left homeless by the Korean War. Though it took an act of the U.S. Congress, the Hols adopted eight of those children. But they were moved by the desperate plight of other orphaned children in Korea and other countries as well, so they founded Holt International Children's Services in order to unite homeless children with families who would love them as their own. Today Holt International serves children and families in Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea (South Korea), Romania, South Africa, Thailand, Uganda, Ukraine, the United States and Vietnam.

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Nurturing the Potential of Children

Gary N. Gamer, President and CEO

While I was visiting a childcare facility in an African country recently, as often happens in developing countries, the power went out. Suddenly the children, who had been lying in cribs, began to wail. At first the sound was only eerie, but as their voices rose, the air seemed to swell with the children's fears.

My heart went out to those children. Deprived of close personal care, children feel vulnerable and afraid. Without security and encouragement their development begins to fall behind. How I wished that Holt was already at work in this institution.

Holt's goal for every child is that each one will be united with a permanent, loving family. And while Holt pursues a permanent solution, we provide nurturing care that not only alleviates children's fears, it encourages their growth and development. For over half a century, these have been the hallmarks of Holt's work. Around the world today, orphaned, abandoned and vulnerable children need the kind of caring that Holt and our international partners provide.

During 2007 Holt and its partners surpassed several noteworthy milestones:

- over 40,000 children placed with loving adoptive families in the United States
- we placed our 1,000th Vietnamese child with a U.S. adoptive family
- we reached over 5,000 Chinese children placed with adoptive families
- 25,000 children have been served through a variety of programs in Romania
- 75,000 Korean children have now received permanent, loving families
- early in 2008 our partner agency BSSK in India placed its 3,000th child with an adoptive family

Every one of the children represented by these statistics has a very real and individual story. It is our mission to children in need to find ways that will open up a world of possibilities for each one. Still, it is their own individual potential that we are simply helping to release. It is a privilege to serve

children as we do.

But this work is possible only because of our partners in serving children—donors, adoptive families and colleagues around the world. Together, we are all motivated by our faith and by our commitment to the inestimable value of every child.

On behalf of Holt International and the children we serve, I thank you for your interest in making a difference in children's lives. You help us to ensure that children are loved and cared for, that their fears are comforted and that they are neither left behind nor left outside of the love and belonging of a family.



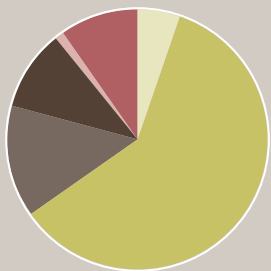
Gary N. Gamer

President and CEO

For a copy of Holt's 2007 annual report or audited financial statement, please visit www.holtinternational.org/annualreport or call 888.355.HOLT

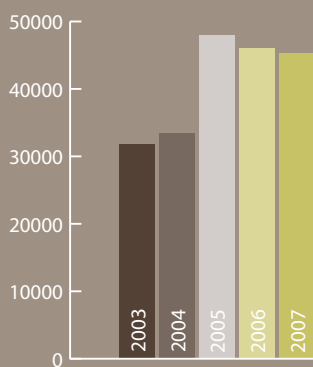
Brief stories on Rosalia (pictured here) from Romania and Autumn Cloud (bottom right) from China are included in Holt's annual report available online at holtinternational.org/annualreport



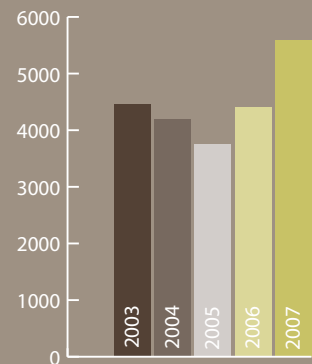


Permanent Placements Distribution

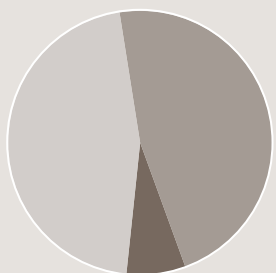
- Remain with Birth Family—3335
- Overseas Domestic Placements—786
- US International Placements—561
- Other International Placements—532
- Return to Birth Family—309
- US Domestic Placements—59



Total Children Served



Total Permanent Placements



2007 Revenue

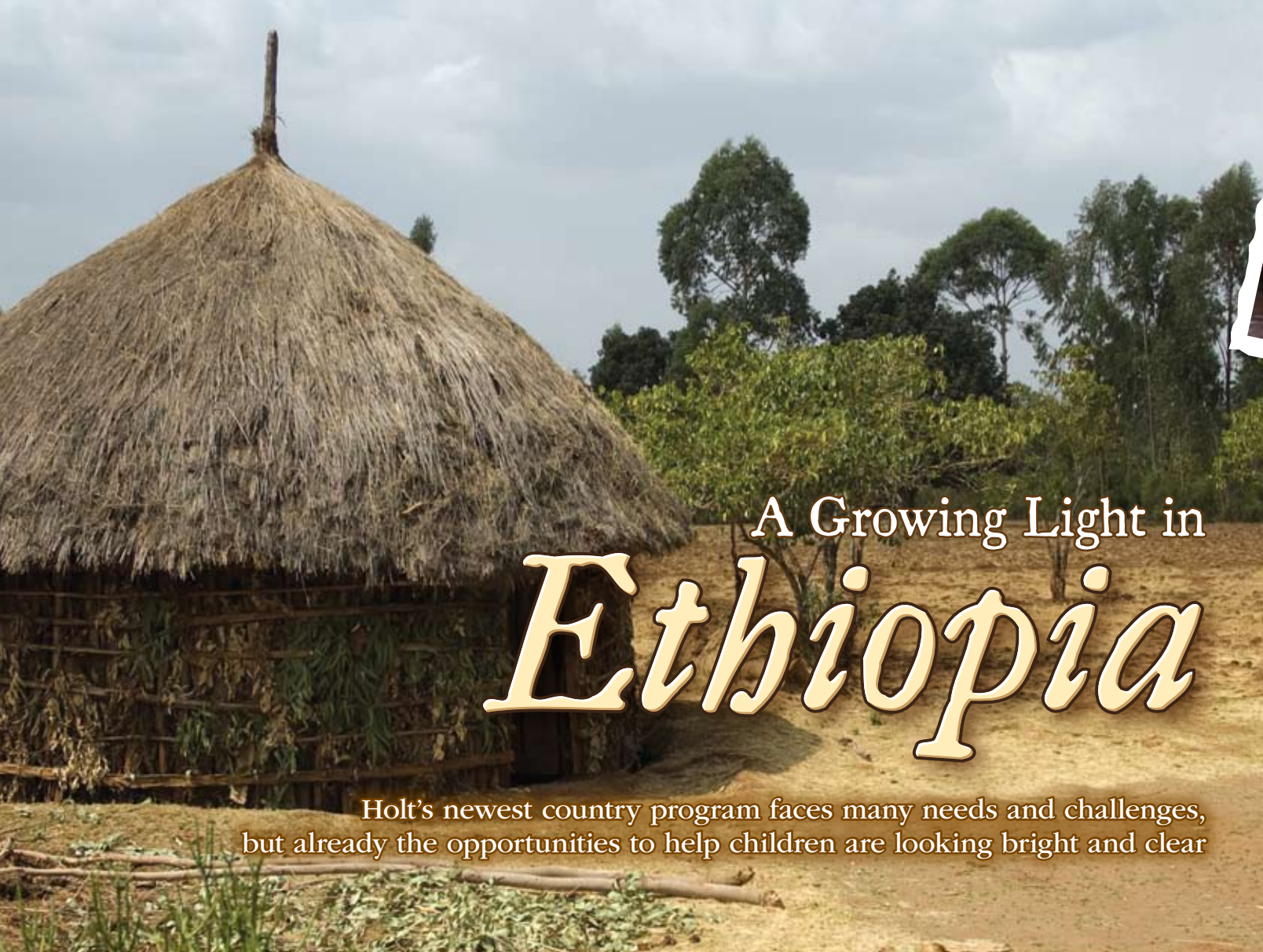
- Public Support—\$9,089,000
 - Adoption Fees—\$8,883,000
 - Other—\$1,269,000
- Total Revenue—\$19,241,000**



2007 Expenses

- International Programs—\$8,551,000
 - Adoptive Family Services—\$6,193,000
 - Fundraising—\$2,340,000
 - Management & General—\$1,799,000
- Total Expenses—\$18,883,000**





A Growing Light in *Ethiopia*

Holt's newest country program faces many needs and challenges, but already the opportunities to help children are looking bright and clear

by Gary N. Gamer
President and CEO

Stepping into the cool darkness of a conical, thatched-roof Ethiopian home, my eyes needed time to adjust. Slowly at first and then more and more, details began to emerge out of the shadows.

A few minutes later I was seated with a young woman holding her infant son, and the woman's father. As we settled in to discuss the situation for the child as well as for the family, it soon became apparent that critical issues were facing the family on many fronts.

Several family members were infected with tuberculosis, the family's livelihood was threatened, the young mother was not married and the child was facing rejection by the community. But it also became apparent that the family's foremost concern was for the baby—the little boy's welfare and future.

At that moment I was deeply touched by this family's faith in us. They would entrust this little boy to Holt—to help him grow and develop in the nurturing arms of a loving adoptive family. It never fails to move me when I think of the awesome responsibility we have when we accept a child into our program.

It's been several weeks since I visited Holt's newest program in Ethiopia. But that encounter with the family in a remote part of southern Ethiopia and my visits with staff and projects have left me with a lasting hopeful impression about Ethiopia. The commonly held image of Ethiopia is one of great despair—starving children and a drought ravaged landscape. But this view misses the many positives and the dynamism that are a much more accurate characterization of this country, especially in the area of helping homeless children.

Ethiopia is rich in resources, culture and diverse peoples. It is one of the world's oldest nations with some of the oldest traces of humanity. Some archeologists believe that the vicinity of present-day Addis Ababa was the point from which human beings began to migrate around the world.

Ethiopia has a great many needs, to be sure, but they are needs much like I have seen in many other countries around the world. Children lose their families due to social pressures, unmarried parents, HIV/AIDS and other diseases and other crises, often



combined with poverty. With a population of over 75 million there are bound to be a great many children facing these challenges.

But in Ethiopia Holt has a great opportunity to make a vital difference in the lives of many homeless and vulnerable children and families. The child welfare arm of the government is staffed with knowledgeable people who have the confidence to ask for help. These authorities are taking initiative to work with non-governmental organizations to create a safeguarded international adoption system, and they require adoption agencies to establish projects that benefit the many children for whom international adoption is not an appropriate solution. This, of course, matches Holt's vision, because we incorporate family preservation efforts and domestic adoption into our work wherever we serve.

The Durame Center

After we had driven for hours on dusty roads along the southern edge of the Great Rift Valley, we came to Durame where the government is allowing us to renovate a home into a childcare facility. As we pulled up

to the high wall surrounding the home and entered, I couldn't help thinking, "I've got a good feeling about this place."

And, going in, we were greeted by childcare workers holding beautiful children. All around the walls were covered with bright colors, and the rooms were furnished with stimulating toys and decorations made by local artists. You could tell a lot of thought had gone into creating a home where children would thrive.

At first the children were a little shy of me, but their clear, healthy skin, plump arms and bright eyes, showed that these children were in loving arms. They had come from hard conditions—having lost parents, surviving unhealthy environments and malnutrition, but when we saw them, they were coming into the wonderful, amazing potential that God places within every child.

Our first priority in Ethiopia is to develop a solid program that can provide top-notch care for children who are outside of family care and in need of adoptive families. The Durame Center and its staff will

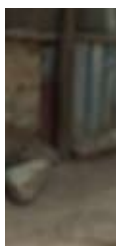
From left: Thatched-roof homes like this one are common in rural Ethiopia. Center, from top: Holt recently opened a childcare center in Durame that will provide temporary care for children in a bright and colorful environment.

- A childcare worker offers loving and attentive care to a baby at the Durame Center.
- Holt President and CEO Gary Gamer holds a baby while visiting with the staff of the Durame Center.

Above: After coming into Holt care, this boy basks in the freedom and security of loving attention and guidance, good nutrition and medical check-ups.



Left and top: Fikru Heramo, M.D., Holt's Ethiopia country director, brings medical expertise and affection for children to his leadership for Holt's work in Ethiopia. • Holt President and CEO Gary Gamer holds an underweight infant who came into care exhibiting signs of failure to thrive. • A childcare worker holds that same infant a few weeks later. Responding to attentive care and good nutrition, she has gained weight and is showing other signs of improved health.



provide this initial care, get children on the road to good health and ensure that adoption is truly the best solution for children in its care.

These children will then be transferred to Holt's newly acquired center in Addis Ababa where the children will continue to receive excellent care while they are in process for adoption.

But right along with the adoption program, Holt is developing a full range of services in southern Ethiopia to help at-risk families to stay together. This year we are opening a medical clinic that will help families and their children.

When the Ethiopian government licensed Holt for international adoption, they entrusted Holt to make a difference for families in this southern area of the country. It's a challenge, but already so much is in place for Holt to achieve great things in this country.

Addis Ababa

In a particularly poor part of Ethiopia's capital city we visit an orphanage. In a classroom, 30 or so children sit at desks learning to read. I'm told that all of them have lost their parents to disease or other causes.

Education is a good step, but without parents to love and

encourage them, their potential is drastically limited. They will miss the love and belonging every child needs. And the orphanage doesn't have the trained staff or authorizations for adoption. For now, these children are stuck.

Holt has come to Ethiopia to help children such as these. Perhaps some can be returned to extended family members; many more will probably need families abroad.

At a center where Holt children are receiving care, I watch as Holt's director in Ethiopia, Fikru Heramo, M.D., comes in and settles on the floor to interact with children. The children naturally swarm around him and play with the hat he put on for their entertainment. It's good to know that the person who heads up our work in Ethiopia is not only highly skilled in medical knowledge and children's programs, he truly loves and enjoys the children. Children, of course, sense his spirit and readily approach him for a hug or pat on the head.

In an adjoining nursery I pick up a little girl who shows the effects of malnutrition. Thin and listless, her life hangs in the balance. Dr. Fikru talks with the staff about her condition. In this case, it's not so complicated. She needs basic, good nutrition and loving care so that her system can kick in and readily improve.

I'm reminded of the example of Harry Holt trying to bring critically weak children back to health in postwar Korea. His affection and attentive feeding brought hundreds back from the brink of death. Many of these became the sons and daughters of families in America who pioneered international adoption in the 1950s.

Since my return to the United States, I have heard that the little malnourished girl has turned the corner and is well on her way to a healthy life—and in the future, adoption into a very fortunate family.

Ingredients for Success

Clearly, there is great need for an organization like Holt to help children in Ethiopia. An estimated 4.3 million children are orphaned or separated from families. But what is needed for Holt to succeed in Ethiopia?

- (1) a government that understands the potential of child welfare organizations such as Holt to partner with them with the right mix of oversight and freedom to meet the needs of children.
- (2) families for homeless children.
- (3) the staff with skills, heart and dedication to develop services and reach out to children in need.

I believe all of these ingredients exist for Ethiopia.

The government has established an effective international adop-

tion system and has allowed Holt the privilege of serving children and families in southern Ethiopia.

We have capable leaders that are change agents for children, and a staff who truly have a heart for children. They are engaged, warm toward children and really focused and dedicated. I was told of two childcare workers who traveled from Durame to Addis and stayed with their sick children in a hospital for a month. They were committed to seeing these children recover their health. I'm humbled at this dedication—giving themselves, right from the beginning to these children's well being and to Holt's work in Ethiopia. These are champions for children, working with us and embracing our mission.

Finally (4)...

We need the grace of God to enable us to do this work. It's a blessing to be in Ethiopia and to have this possibility of serving children there. We pray that God's light continues to shine on Holt's work, enabling us to touch the lives of many children—and that we're part of God's glorious story for this country. ■

More on Ethiopia online: holtinternational.org/ethiopia

- Read blog entries from Ethiopia by Brian Campbell
- See videos of Holt President Gary Gamer in Ethiopia
- Find out more about adopting from Ethiopia
- Sign up for a Holt webinar on adopting a child from Ethiopia



Adopting a Child from Ethiopia

The children—boys and girls from infants to 7 years old, can be as young as 6 months at placement. Typically, they are healthy and well adjusted after being in Holt's care. Thousands of children in Ethiopia need the love and belonging of an adoptive family. Holt needs adoptive families for...

- Gender—boys and girls. (but especially for boys)
- Ages—infants through school age
- Health—most children are healthy and within normal ranges for development. Some children with medical conditions or special needs are available through Holt's Waiting Child Program.
- Priorities—We especially need families for boys and siblings.

Relaxed requirements—few restrictions affect most families. Ethiopian adoption is open for:

- Married couples (married at least two years, up to two divorces)
- Age 25–50, having up to five children at home
- With income above 125 percent of the poverty line

- Childless couples and families with one girl must be open to either gender

Time frame—Ethiopia offers a quick, relatively uncomplicated process, generally 12 to 18 months from approved application to child placement for most families.

Cost—Ethiopia is also one of Holt's least expensive programs, even with travel to Ethiopia.

Travel—At least one parent must travel to Ethiopia to receive the child. Parents stay in Ethiopia for approximately one week to complete processing.





Ivy Shaffer-Marks with her new daughter, Kira.

Kira Comes Home

The Winter issue of Holt magazine featured a story by Ivy Shaffer-Marks about the decision she and husband Dani made to adopt a child from China who had special health-care needs. Like many families in process to adopt from China, they had been waiting a long time for a match when they decided to open their hearts to a little girl with cleft lip and palate. In late January, Ivy and Dani brought Kira home from China.

Hague Accreditation

On April 1, the requirements of the U.S.-signed treaty known as the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption went into effect. This means that if you plan to adopt from a country that signed the Hague Convention, an international treaty that sets ethical standards of practice for adoption, you must choose a Hague-accredited agency such as Holt International to complete your adoption. Holt is one of 144 adoption agencies that have met the U.S. State Department's standard for international adoptions—Hague accreditation, as certified by the Council on Accreditation.

Holt President and CEO Gary Gamer notes that Holt International sat at the table in The Hague when the treaty was being drafted in the early 1980s. "We have been steady advocates for its formulation into law and application of principles ever since," he said. "The Hague, in part, is based on Holt practices through the years. It is part of the legacy of Harry and Bertha Holt and the great work of our staff and partners around the world."

Holt Events

Silk Bag Luncheon: The third annual Holt luncheon held in San Francisco in late January raised more than \$42,000 for the support and care of children in our Waiting Child Program.

Omaha Auction: At the Omaha fundraiser, attendees donated over \$98,000 to children in Holt's Waiting Child program.

Guest speaker Steve Stirling, a member of the Holt Board of Directors, shared his personal life story at both events. "God

had something in mind for me to do with my life," he said. Once a waiting child at Ilsan Center in Korea, Steve reminded all present of the potential in every life regardless of the challenges.

Made in China

by Vanita Oelschlager; 40 pages, \$17.95, VanitaBooks, June 2008.

Made In China, for children 4–8 years old and their families, is based on the personal, heartfelt adoption journey experienced by both the author and illustrator. The book deals with unique and unexpected issues of foreign adoption, such as the potential for sibling rivalry. As the story opens, this young girl feels sad and confused when her older sister, teasing her, says she was "made in China" — just like the toys she plays with in her room.

The child's father calms her fears by explaining her birthparents' decision and the joy her American family feels at bringing their daughter home to be part of their lives forever. He tells her, "So, yes my love, I guess it's true. You were made in China, but not like a shoe. Not of plastic or cloth, but from a love that can never be lost."

A children's press that donates all profits to charity, VanitaBooks was founded in 2006 to help support the Jim and Vanita Oelschlager Foundation. Author Vanita Oelschlager and her husband, Jim, founded

the Oak Adoptive Health Clinic at Akron Children's Hospital in 2004. Jim and Vanita hope that through VanitaBooks they might introduce even the youngest children to philanthropy. They want to bring to children and parents a meaningful story and at the same time create a new generation of givers. In 2007, Vanita was awarded the Congressional Angels in Adoption Award for her commitment to promoting adoption. Book illustrator Kristin Blackwood is Vanita's daughter and the mother of an adopted Chinese daughter. Kristin used linoleum cuts for the artwork.

The book can be purchased through the Holt website using amazon.com at www.holtinternational.org/shopping. All profits from the sale of the book will be donated to Holt International.

Adoptee Camps

Holt International's Adoptee Camps for international and transracial adoptees from 9–16 years of age will meet in California, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Nebraska during July and August. For more information, go online to holtinternational.org/camp

Heritage camps for adoptees sponsored by other organizations include:

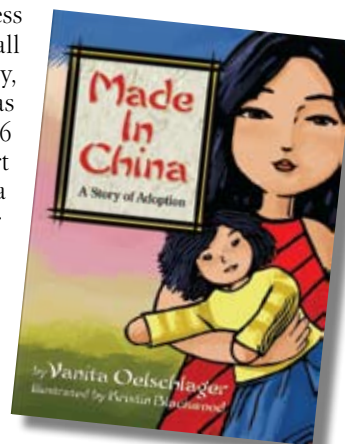
Camp Friendship— these two culture day camps in New Jersey are for Korean and Chinese adoptees and their siblings entering grades K–7: campfriendshipnj.com

Colorado Heritage Camps— birth culture camps for children adopted from various countries: heritagecamps.org

Filipino Culture Camp— Camp Mabuhay in Kokomo, Indiana, on June 14 welcomes families who have ties to the Philippines through adoption, marriage, friendships and ancestry: filipino-adoptees-network.org/cmindiana

Artist Concerts

Dove Award-winning Christian group NewSong and other Holt artists performed to packed audiences around the country on recent tours—and helped sign several thousand new child sponsors, who make it possible for many more children to find permanent, loving families. Orphaned, abandoned and vulnerable children supported through the Holt



Child Sponsorship Program receive loving and attentive nurture, nourishing food, safe shelter, and medical care and immunizations while Holt finds a permanent placement.

Photos

Holt Graduates: Deadline for photos of Holt adoptees who are graduating from high school and college is June 1. Short stories from families about their graduate are also welcome. For a Graduate Submission Form, go online to holtinternational.org/gradsubmissions. Stories go to editorial@holtinternational.org

Calendar Photos: Deadline for photos for the Holt yearly calendar is July 15. Please upload digital images (3 megapixels or higher) to holtinternational.org/submissions or mail glossy prints 4 x 6 to 11 x 14 to Calendar Photos, Holt International, P.O. Box 2880, Eugene, OR 97402. We cannot use inkjet or digital prints, or studio photographs (except for graduate photos).

Holt Publications

From the Field: You can read about recent trips by Holt staff members to China and Ethiopia in *From the Field*, the Holt International travel blog. To learn more about our programs in these and other countries, be sure to visit our website for a look at: holtinternational.org/blog

E-newsletter. Did you know? We publish a monthly E-newsletter that brings you up-to-date news on adoption and sponsorship and provides inspirational stories of children and families. Go to holtinternational.org/enews to sign up for free.

Federal Tax Credit

Susan Cox, Holt Vice President of Public Policy and Advocacy, reports that legislation has already been introduced in the U.S. Senate and action is expected in 2009 for renewal of the federal adoption tax credit. A number of websites keep watch on this important benefit to adoptive fami-

lies but none more reliable than the U.S. Department of the Treasury, IRS at www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc607.html.

In Memory

August 31, 1987–December 24, 2007

Andrew Wright, adopted from South Korea in 1989 by Ed and Jean Wright of Millville, New Jersey, died unexpectedly in late December. An Eagle Scout who enjoyed hunting, fishing and crabbing as well as art and sports, Andrew was a talented landscaper who dreamed of becoming a history teacher. He attended the Holt Heritage Camp in New Jersey for several years and continued to correspond with the friends he met there and held special in his heart. ■



Your Sponsorship can...

Change
a child's **life**
forever

Orphaned, abandoned and vulnerable children around the world need food, shelter, clothing and medical treatment... essentials your sponsorship of \$30 per month will help provide.

Choose a child to sponsor from Holt's website: holtinternational.org/sponsorship or call 888.355.HOLT

HoltInternational



Around the Globe

Christmas Parties

When most children around the world are celebrating the joy and wonder of life during year-end holidays, children in orphanages, foster homes and poor families often get left out because the resources simply are not available. But that's not the case where Holt International is involved. Thanks to sponsors and donors, children in Holt's programs joined the recent celebrations at Christmas and New Year's.

"Thank you for remembering us this Christmas!" was the enthusiastic message received from the Durame Intake Center in Ethiopia, where staff used donations to buy colorful mobiles for the baby room and new carpets and wall hangings to improve the environment of the center. Children now have a small TV and DVD player, and the kitchen is newly supplied with pots and pans, cutting boards and utensils. The children's party featured a Christmas tree, lights and decorations, and children were given dolls, play dough and other presents. Staff held a traditional Ethiopian coffee ceremony and shared cakes and cupcakes and played children's music.

At the Bishkek Baby Home in Kyrgyzstan, 131 children celebrated New Year's with visits from Santa Claus and the Snow Maiden. All the children wore costumes such as snowflakes, rabbits, lions and even Dalmatian puppies. Children played games, sang, recited poems, walked around the Christmas tree and received gifts such as sweets, biscuits, baby food, clothes, shoes and new bedding. In Medgidia, Romania, the party brought smiles to the faces of 20 at-risk children who shared candies, sweets and oranges and received sports clothing and shoes. A New Year's party in the village of Mokrets, Ukraine, included toys, pizza, french fries,

desserts and a trip to the movie theater. And in Guangxi Liuzhou, China, 67 foster children and their foster families celebrated the New Year with snacks, cakes and balloons, and the children received scarves, gloves and earmuffs. These are just a few of many special celebrations held in our programs around the world through your generosity.

Kyrgyzstan

At the Uch Korgon Children's Home outside the town of Osh, children attend the local community school with other children from their village, receive medical evaluations and medical care, and sometimes go home with caregivers over the weekend or holidays



Children at the Bishkek Baby Home in Kyrgyzstan.

to have a family experience. The director believes in teaching the children to be self-sufficient, and they learn to garden, grow fruits and vegetables, and other skills they can later use to help themselves and their community. Holt International recently added seven children from Uch Korgon to our Sponsorship Program.

Bulgaria

Holt International is busy recruiting families for our newly reopened Bulgaria adoption program.

India

Bharatiya Samaj Seva Kendra, Holt International's partner agency in Pune, India, recently placed its 3,000th child into an adoptive family. With word of this milestone, Holt President and CEO Gary Gamer said: "What came immediately to mind was not this sheer number, as impressive as it is. In its 28 years of service, BSSK has never backed away from an unending stream of children in need of families. The images that came to my mind were BSSK staff and volunteers selflessly caring for children... the countless hours and instances of individual attention, the profound respect at all agency levels for children who do not have a say in their destiny but who are understood as a gift from God."

A childcare worker with children in Holt care at BSSK in Pune, India.





A boy in Holt-supported care at the Infant Sanatorium in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, snuggles under a blanket quilted by the women of the Redmond Free Methodist Church, Redmond, Oregon.

Young men receive computer training at the Close to You Foundation in Iasi, Romania.

Guatemala

Based on the results of the first comprehensive survey of Guatemala's childcare institutions, Holt reports 5,449 children in 134 orphanages (six government and 128 private). Holt carried out the USAID-funded survey with the help of the Guatemalan social welfare agency Secretaría de Bienestar Social as part of a project to provide training in "best practices" in child welfare as Guatemala works toward an international adoption process compliant with The Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation

in Respect of Intercountry Adoption.

The second phase of the project takes place April through June as Holt conducts seminars and study tours for key Guatemalan officials, academics and practitioners.

Additionally, Holt was asked by UNICEF to create a model foster care project in the Zacapa region.



Child in care at the SBS government-run orphanage in Guatemala, 2008.

Merciful Care

At the Rainbow Baby Care Unit in Mongolia

Chuluun* needed immediate medical emergency treatment when residents found him abandoned in the entrance of their apartment building in Ulaanbaatar last June. He was so young that his navel had not yet healed. His body covered in bruises, his skull fractured and swollen, this little boy had been savagely brutalized during his brief sojourn on Earth.

After a resident phoned police, an officer picked the boy up and delivered him to the Infant Sanatorium, Mongolia's primary state care facility for homeless



children under the age of 3, and where Holt International supports the Rainbow Baby Care Unit. The Infant Sanatorium Clinic has no budget for the expensive emergency care Chuluun needed, except through the support of Holt International

Mongolia

Tungalag Namsrai is the new Naidvar Center Director, working out of our Ulaanbaatar office. She has been with Holt from the beginning of the establishment of the Naidvar Center in 1999. In late January, children at the Infant Sanatorium received a shipment of blankets donated by Lois Holt and the "Gifted Hands" ladies of the Free Methodist Church in Redmond, Oregon.

Romania

The Close to You Foundation (CTY) launched a new project that aims for social and professional integration of 42 HIV-infected or underprivileged young people. The youth have finished eight grades in school and been unemployed for more than six months. The project focuses on training them in book-binding and computer use. CTY will also provide counseling and support in finding, occupying and maintaining a workplace. The project is co-financed by CTY and the European Commission through the Phare program. CTY is one of two Holt partner agencies in Romania.

Haiti

Children at Holt Fontana Village were being kept safe during recent food riots in Haiti. Staff members report keeping a low profile and minimizing travel to Port-au-Prince. Foundations were poured recently for four new donor-supported houses to shelter more children.

donors and sponsors. Likewise, this badly injured infant would not have received the necessary medicines through the government fund, as they were too expensive. But Chuluun did get the additional help he needed, because people far away cared enough to provide funding.

After four months of intensive care and close attention, Chuluun is completely recovered. Today, he has reached weight and height levels of his age group, and he is not showing any serious brain-related damages or illness.

Chuluun is one of 90 children in Mongolia being supported by Holt sponsors.

* name has been changed

Adopting a Boy from China

Doors open for a couple who built their family by choosing children with special healthcare needs

by Amy S. Brown / Valencia, Pennsylvania

My grandmother used to say that when God closes one door, He opens another. In the spring of 1995, my husband Jim and I decided to begin the process to adopt a child. We had three wonderful boys born to us, but a miscarriage and some health concerns about me having another child had closed that door. At the time, we could not foresee all that was in store for us. After a somewhat frustrating search to find an agency based on Christian principles whose work on behalf of children went beyond completing adoptions, we learned about Holt's mission and began the dizzying process of compiling documents.

China at that time required us to be open to a child with special needs because we already had three children. How we prayed over that special needs checklist. After many months, we received the call—an infant daughter was waiting for us in Nanning, Guangxi! Her need was almost inconsequential, and Aileen Grace joined our family in July 1996. We believed our family was complete.

After moving into a larger home in 1999, we found ourselves wondering if our hearts had more room, too. An adoption application sat on the kitchen counter for months before Jim and I decided to send it in. The China Center for Adoption Affairs (CCAA) had changed position on requiring families who already had children to adopt children with special needs, but because we had

sent Holt's special needs checklist with our first application years before, we decided to complete the checklist again.

In January 2001 a tiny but determined little girl with turned feet toddled down the hall of Foshan Social Welfare Institute into our arms and hearts. Shanna Li was home. Now, the door was certainly closed, was it not? We had five wonderful, active children to care for. Our lives were sometimes insanely busy, particularly dealing with the surgeries and treatments that Shanna needed. While she was undergoing a lengthy treatment in spring 2002, Preston, our third son, mentioned that he would like a little brother. Feeling a bit overwhelmed, I took his comment with a grain of salt, but casually asked him how old a brother he would like. He replied, "Oh, 2 or 3 years old." The door opened a crack.

I enjoyed visiting the waiting child photolisting on Holt's website occasionally and felt such joy when a child's photo read, "I have a family!" I found myself frequenting the photolisting on a regular basis. I noticed a new face one day, a little boy with sparkling eyes living in China. His hands and feet were different from most, and he was beautiful! I began to check the photolisting almost daily, hoping a family had been found for him. Weeks went by, then months, but he remained on the list. I began praying for him to find a loving family, even printing out his photo



Jim Brown with his new son, Shon, on the Great Wall, October 2003.

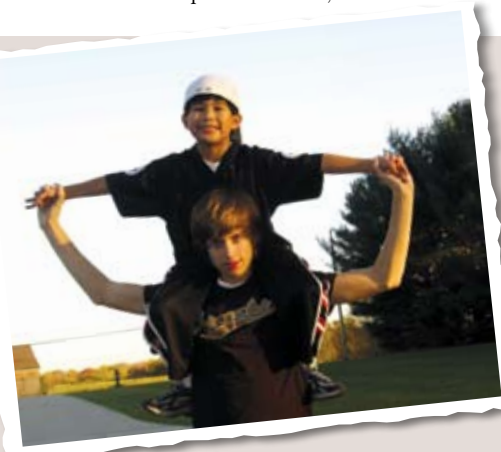
as a reminder. Our children started to ask about him, and Preston wondered if we could adopt him. I said we couldn't, because the CCAA had limited the family size for prospective adoptive families to four children in the home.

Another Child

In January 2003 I felt a strong push to phone the Waiting Child director at Holt. I called Jim at work, and we decided that I should go ahead and call, but if another family had indicated an interest in this little boy, we would accept that as our answer. The director said that no one was viewing his file at that time. When I asked where he was living, she said, "Nanning SWI."

Not one week before, Jim and I had spoken with each other about how much we wanted Aileen to have the chance to visit her hometown of Nanning someday! The

continued on next page



Shon in a recent photo on the shoulders of his brother, Preston.

Boys Need Families, Too

As parents of a boy from China, Jim and I have at times encountered disbelief, pointed questions, and stereotyping within the adoption community. It is clear that perceptions need to change through sharing accurate information. Some parents of boys encounter negative attitudes from parents of adopted girls who maintain that Chinese girls are more deserving of homes. Every child who is growing up without parents deserves to have a permanent, loving home.

In many ways there exists a paradox of gender imbalance and culture within China, where boys are often favored, yet in international and U.S. domestic adoption circles, girls are preferred by a wide margin. The same paradox is evident when the referral of an infant boy is not accepted based on gender, even though a boy would have been welcomed through pregnancy. The two of us are raising four sons and two daughters. The boys are not harder to raise, nor are the girls. Parenting each child presents a unique challenge that results in intangible but great reward. Children come to their families in different ways as individuals, and we are all

blessed to be their parents. ■

—by Amy Brown

At a NewSong Concert

An adoptive family goes onstage for children enrolled in Holt's Sponsorship Program

by Ginger Sanders / Toney, Alabama

Dennis and I had been married several years when we decided to investigate the possibility of adoption. Doctors had told us the likelihood of ever having children by birth was almost impossible.

We filed and processed paperwork with the help of Catholic Social Services and soon got a call that they had received a package from Holt International. We rushed down to open the package, read the papers and see the photo of our son. He was found in an alley in Seoul near the garbage cans, taken to Holt and was living in a foster home, being loved and taken care of with tender hands. An escort brought Jamie to us in Chicago. Jamie arrived weighing only 13 pounds at 6 months. But he quickly learned to eat cereal and grew into a healthy, wonderful young man.

In 1974, three years after Jamie's arrival, we applied through Holt for another child from Korea. We received a package with a photo of a beautiful little girl that had been taken as an abandoned child to the Holt Orphanage. Kara (Park, Kyung-hee) was also placed in a foster home, where she was taken care of with loving hands until she could come to America. She was escorted to Chicago O'Hare Airport and arrived weighing only 9 pounds at the young age of 4½ months.

Jamie was so excited when we brought Kara home. "She has a nose like me!" he exclaimed. "She has eyes like me! She looks just like me! I love her!"

We thought our family was complete and had sold all our baby stuff and were settled in to be a family of four. However, God had other plans. Ten years later, we found out we were having a son. Then, 15 months later, we had another son.

We discovered, through love of all our children, that there is absolutely not one twit of difference in them (for their love for each other or our love and feelings for them). They all are very close to each other, and even though they are now grown and live literally all across the country, they stay in close contact. Jamie lives in Cincinnati, Kara in Hawaii, Todd in South Carolina and BJ attends seminary in Dallas, Texas. And, if we had known that God would bless us 10 years after we adopted with two birth children, it would not have changed our decision to adopt. We are the ones who have been blessed.

Winter Xtreme and NewSong

BJ, being a youth minister, hosted a group of youth to the Winter Xtreme concert in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, in 2006. He had so many youth sign up to attend that he called and asked us to help chaperone. Having recently retired, we jumped at the chance to be a part of this Christian music festival. Upon arriving, we listened to NewSong and their testimony of sponsoring orphaned children through Holt International. We got excited as we heard about this opportunity. We found the table to sign up and talked to the Holt representative. Later that day, she called and said

NewSong had requested to meet us to see if we would share our story on stage.

We had no idea that this would come full circle in our lives, and that we would be able to help children waiting to be adopted like ours once were. It is amazing that we can still be a part of and have a peace about this wonderful work for the children that Harry and Bertha Holt started many years ago. ■



The Sanders clan—Front row, from left: Jamie, Bailey, Kara and Stevo Maresca; Second row: Jennifer (BJ's wife), Melissa (Jamie's wife), Ginger, Peyton (Jamie's daughter); Back row: BJ, Todd and Dennis.

continued from previous page

problem was, though, we were over the family size limit to adopt from China. I was referred to the coordinator of the China program who was cautious but willing. "I'm leaving for China in five days," she said, "and I will take your family's information with me to request an exception to family size. We can try."

In the coming weeks, the exception was granted provided we adopted a child with special needs, and we were officially matched by the Waiting Child Committee with 3-year-old Yuan Xiao Hong. After

navigating the dossier process for a third time, including a setback when the CCAA indicated concern about our large family's ability to provide him with adequate medical care, we found ourselves on the way to China. Preston and Aileen accompanied us and watched as our new son, Shon, ran into our arms, calling, "Mama! Baba!" on October 15 in Nanning. For months I had questioned why no family had been found for him. Now we know that God wanted us to be that family. As I photographed Shon riding on Jim's shoulders on the Great Wall, it was as though his past heritage and new family had come together in celebra-

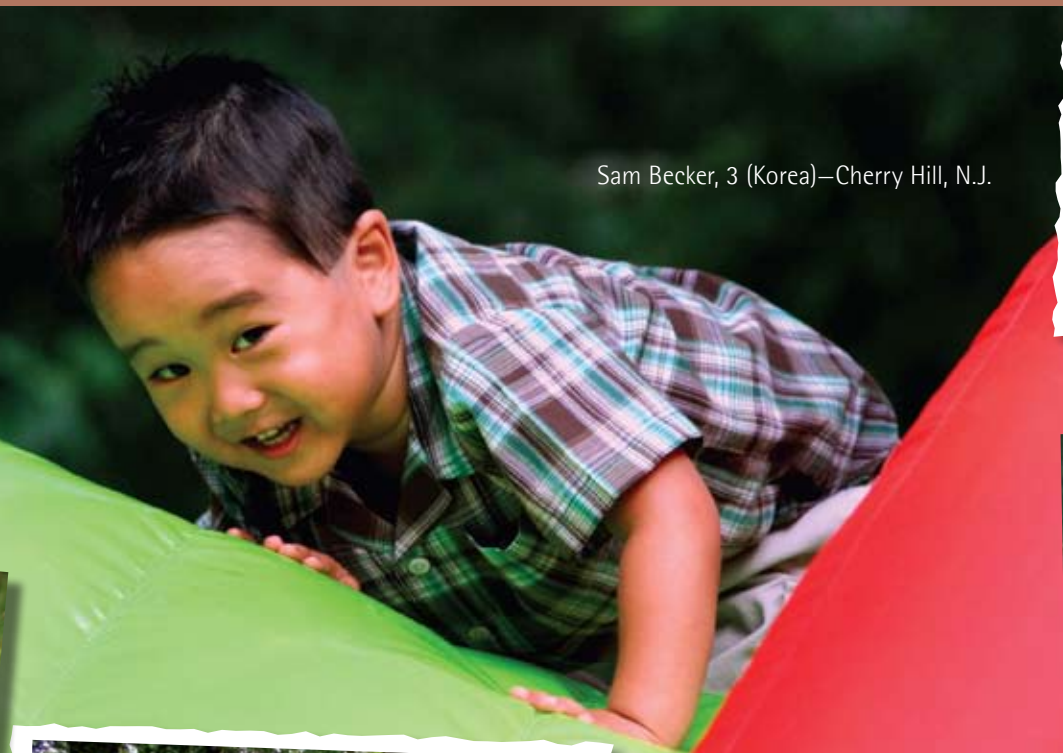
tion of this little boy's life.

Had we been told when we were married 22 years ago that we would have six children through birth and adoption, each with unique abilities and challenges, we would not have believed it. As some doors have closed with tears, others have opened. Our family has become stronger and our children more accepting of differences in others. People sometimes tell us that we are a special family for having chosen to adopt children who needed extra care, but we continue to receive so much more in return than we can possibly give. ■

family tree



Lewis Christensen, 2 (Korea)—Gresham, Ore.



Sam Becker, 3 (Korea)—Cherry Hill, N.J.



Jaden Whitaker, 2 (China)—Newberg, Ore.



Oscar, 1 (Korea) with father, David Mandell—Portland, Ore.



Evelyn Oyler, 1½, and Parker Barnes, 1½, (both from Korea)—Rapid City, S.D.



Mimi, 2, and Lily Albano, 4 (both from Korea)—Dallas, Ga.



Philip, 10 (Korea) and Florentina Ellis, 9 (Romania)—Palmdale, Calif.



Mia, 32 (Korea), and Adam Shopis—Jamaica Plain, Mass.



Ami Kim Kuebler, 32 (Korea), with groom David Isaksson—St. James, N.Y.



Maria Morley, 3 (Korea)—Monett, Mo.

Lola Kamali Wendstrand, 3 (China)—Los Gatos, Calif.



Melia, 5, and John Smith, 4 (both from China)—Gresham, Ore.



Lydia Bard, 7 (Korea)—Oregon City, Ore.



Jayden Musset, 11 months (China)—Dublin, Calif.

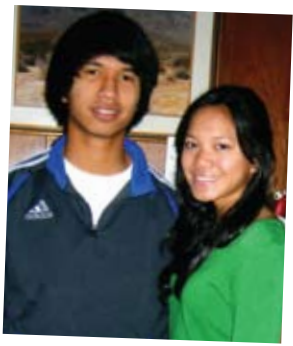


Malachi, 5, and Martand Delwiche, 2½ (both from India)—Blue Mounds, Wis.

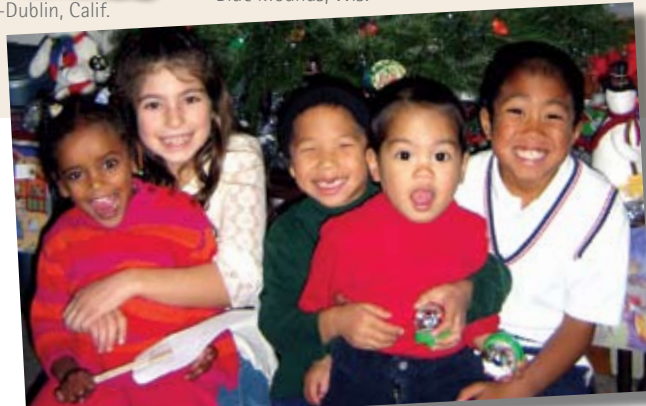
Send your photos to Family Tree!

Mail original color prints to:
Holt International magazine
P.O. Box 2880
Eugene, OR 97402

or upload digital photos at
holtinternational.org/submissions



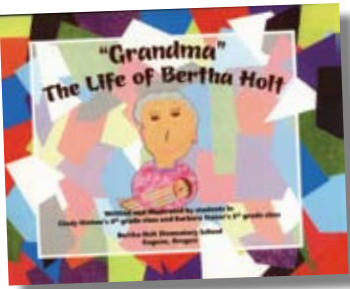
Siblings Neill, 19, and Emma Ouska, 17 (both from Thailand)—Rockville, Md.



Hiwot, 3 (Ethiopia); Kayla, 9; Xiao-Wei, 5 (China); Vincent, 2, and Raymark Wisotzkey, 8 (both from Philippines)—Landisville, Pa.



Jude, 1 (Vietnam) and Adison Williams, 4—Dallas, Ga.



Above: the cover of a new children's book celebrating the life of "Grandma" Bertha Holt.

Right: Three of the children who worked on the book visited the Holt Office the week of Grandma's birthday. They are, from left: Haley Horton, Amy McConnell, and Kevin Erdmann.

Celebrating Grandma Holt

Grandma Bertha Holt would have enjoyed the way her birthday was celebrated this year. Children at her namesake school in Eugene, Oregon—Bertha Holt Elementary—gave "Grandma" one of her best birthdays ever when they released a book about her life they wrote and illustrated.

"Grandma" *The Life of Bertha Holt* offers a child's-eye view of the beloved co-founder of Holt International from her birth on February 5, 1904, through her death at age 96, including highlights, photographs and colorful collages of scenes from her childhood, farm life, church life, and adoption activism.

Teacher Cindy Hinton, who wrote the grant that funded the book and co-led, along with teacher Barbara Stater, the 4th and 5th grade teams that worked together during the 2006-2007 school year, said she thought it was important for the children at BHES to understand Bertha Holt's legacy.

"I don't want Grandma Holt to become just a name on a building. It's very fitting Grandma Holt had a school named after her because she loved children. It's important for children there to keep her legacy alive," Hinton said.

Buy your copy at Holt's Online Store (\$10, includes S&H): holtinternational.org/store ■



Bertha Holt: An Inspiration

This weekend I was given a recently released children's book about the life of Bertha Holt, the co-founder of our adoption agency. The book, "Grandma" *The Life of Bertha Holt*, was written and illustrated by 4th and 5th grade classes at the Bertha Holt Elementary School in Eugene, Oregon. I already knew Grandma Holt's story, but as I read the book, I found myself looking at her story a bit differently with my almost-50-year-old eyes. Grandma Holt was the mother of six children in the mid-1950s when she and her husband revolutionized international adoption by adopting eight Korean war orphans and establishing the adoption agency that went on to become Holt International Children's Services.

I, too, have six children, but I know that we will not be adopting any more children and certainly not eight more. I admire Grandma Holt for taking on that challenge, but what really struck me as I read through the new book is that when these children joined her family, Grandma was 51 years old—just a little more than a year older than I am now. I am overwhelmed at the thought of someone taking on that sort of parenting responsibility at my age!

However, even more amazing are all the additional feats Bertha Holt went on to accomplish—all after her 50th birthday: She worked with her husband, Harry to establish an international adoption agency.

She moved to S. Korea for two years to help her husband build a childcare center. After Harry Holt's death in 1964, she became the voice and backbone of the agency, and known to thousands of children as Grandma. Again, all after her 50th birthday!

Bertha Holt also traveled the world, received numerous awards and honors and, as if that weren't enough, she took up jogging in her 70s! She continued running regularly until just before her death at the age of 96. In fact, my first memory of Grandma was at a Holt fundraising auction. Grandma was asked to come up on the stage to receive a birthday gift for her 90th birthday. I was amazed at this old woman who seemed to bounce up the steps to the stage—I was even more amazed when, after opening her gift of a new pair of Nike running shoes, she jumped up and down with delight.

Reading Bertha Holt's story with a new perspective gives me a renewed sense of hope and anticipation for what I still might do, what I still might become. As we approach 50, I think we worry about what is ending—youth, reproductive years, beauty, usefulness. But, no! Fifty may be a symbolic ending to some aspects of adult life, but it can be an even stronger symbolic beginning of what we still have left to accomplish. ■

—Debbie Dunham / Brush Prairie, Washington



Debbie Dunham and her middle daughter, Kelsey, hold girls at the Jeonju Baby Home in December 2007 while traveling with Holt International's Korea Gift Team.

See related story p. 28.



Maggie and Mei with mom, Wendy Stewart, and their beloved dogs—at the Bluebonnet Swamp in Louisiana.

Maggie's Adoption Story

Maggie was born and she was a baby
 And she cried and cried.
 And then I got to be adopted.
 Then I got happy.

I love my Mommy.
 I love my Daddy.
 I love everyone in my family.

I miss Foster Mother.
 Foster Mother was nice, and she loved the other babies in the orphanage, too.

Foster Mother really loved me. She's sad 'cause she doesn't have me around anymore...

And then we were all going to get another baby sister named Mei.

Mei needs a Mommy and a Daddy too.
 I really love my MeiMei. She's very friendly.

I am the Big Sister; it is very fun.
 I like being a nice Big Sister.

—Margaret Jane YunMo Stewart, age 4½
 Baton Rouge, Louisiana



Maggie with her foster mother, Nie Hua Ying.

On Becoming a Mom of Two Siblings

In June 2006 we began our journey to the adoption of our children from Thailand. We made it fairly quickly through the Holt application and homestudy process and then began working on the dossier. Although we had hoped all along that we would be able to adopt a sibling group, we had been told that it was a rare occurrence and not to get our hopes up. We anxiously waited to hear if we would be matched with a child in December, but when the month came and went without a word from Holt, we sighed and looked forward to the possibility of March.

What a surprise when, on February 28, 2007, we received the phone call informing us that we had been matched with not just one, but two children! We were thrilled, needless to say, and went through the motions of "considering" whether to accept the match or not, knowing all along that we would say YES!

Top 10 Most Surprising Things About Being a Parent

Well, after almost two weeks of parenting, I thought I'd end with my top 10 most surprising things about being a parent...

10. How proud I feel when they remember little rules like "Eat only in the hard-floor room" or "Take your dish to the sink."
9. How they manage to get so many outfits so dirty!
8. How much louder mealtimes are now.
7. How unskilled I am at little girls' hairdo's!
6. How quickly kisses really do take away the little "owies."
5. How soon after a temper tantrum the smiles and giggles can reappear.
4. How unrestful it is to sleep in a twin-size bed with a squirmy 2-year-old!
3. How long they can fight sleep when they are so exhausted!
2. How many trips to the bathroom a mother of two preschoolers makes in one day!
1. How incredible it feels to hear your own child say "I love you, Mommy" while hugging your legs. (Of course in Thai it sounds like "rak meh.") ■

—Margaret Wofford / Eugene, Oregon
 adapted from her blog



Margaret Wofford with children Beth, 4, and Jack, 2½.

A Thank You to Sponsors

An adoptive mom expresses her gratitude for the care her daughter received in China



by Kelli Graf
Papillion, Nebraska

Photos this page, clockwise: McKenna in her China file photo. • McKenna with her Holt escort before meeting her parents. • McKenna in China soon after adoption with her parents, Kelli and Frank Graf. • McKenna leaves her handprints on official documents in China, signifying her agreement to the adoption. • McKenna holds her U.S. passport. • McKenna rolls out cookie dough in the kitchen.

Dear Sponsor Family,
I thought about you often during our process to adopt Yu Jiao Jiao, now known as, McKenna Mae JiaoJiao Graf. While we were waiting, I was so happy to hear that she had a sponsor family from Holt. Thank you doesn't seem like enough, but I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Because of your generous donation every month, our daughter, JiaoJiao, has been in a loving home all of her life. She was so well cared for in China, and we are so very grateful to you, her foster family and Holt International. Sponsoring children you do not know is such a wonderful thing. It is a gift to the children and their future families.

Because she was in the Meihekou Foster Program and had a sponsor, we were able to receive more information about our daughter—seven updates, with lots of photos from Holt, her foster parents and the orphanage. We are so happy to finally have her home.

Special Healthcare Needs

We first saw her picture on the photolisting for Holt's Waiting Child Program in October 2006. It took us about three months to get the medical information we needed to move forward with her adoption. This was our third adoption from China, but our first special needs adoption.

I told Holt staff that I felt she was meant to be our daughter, but I wasn't praying for that. All I wanted was for her to be adopted into the family meant for her. The wait 'til we heard she would be ours on February 1, 2007, was hard for me. I loved her from the moment I first saw her photos!

The next part of our waiting process began... and finally in July 2007, we were brought together in the Civil Affairs Office in Meihekou. JiaoJiao came in a little hesitantly, but bravely. She just looked at us. I wanted to jump up and hold her, but I waited... She looked back and forth at us and the photos we had sent her and said, "Baba (Daddy), Mama." It melted





Three girls from China now sisters (from back)—Michaela Rose, Mackenzie Grace and McKenna Mae.

The whole family together at Thanksgiving: (front row left to right) Mackenzie Grace, Jonathan, McKenna, Michaela Rose; (second row) Meghan, Mallori, Kelli, with Frank in back.

my heart. She smiled and let me hold her. I am amazed at how well she has done.

Foster Family Care

She grieved deeply that afternoon for her foster family, but then our wonderful Holt guide, Sue Liu, explained to her that we were now her parents, and she would come to America to live with us and our big family. She accepted this and has been happy ever since. Amazing!

Her foster parents took such good care of her. They loved her very much, and it was so hard for them to let her go. I think of them all the time, and I know how much they miss her. We got to meet them while we were in Jilin province—a very emotional meeting for us all. But I am so thankful to have been able to meet them and tell them thank you in person. “Thank you” just isn’t enough, but there are no words to express how thankful our hearts feel. McKenna has been loved always, and it shows with her smile, her actions and her personality!

Sue Liu said to me while I was there, “Do you see a special needs child?” I told her, “No, just a very special child.”

While we were in Meihokou we also got to meet her orphanage director, head nanny of foster care, her foster family, Civil Affairs officers and her physical therapist at Ai Min Hospital. She spoke English and told us all about JiaoJiao’s surgery and therapy. JiaoJiao was very loved by the staff at the hospital, too, and we are, again, thankful for all this information.

As for JiaoJiao’s medical problem, spina bifida, we are in the process of having her evaluated. She walks, runs, jumps, laughs easily, and she is very smart. Whatever she needs we will see that she receives it. She is such a joy in our lives!

Child Sponsorship

Six years ago, we started sponsoring children through Holt International while we were waiting to adopt our daughters from China. We sponsored a little girl for over four years until she was adopted. Amazingly, she was from Meihokou also. I found out while I was there that she was McKenna’s neighbor, two floors down, and I was given photos of the two of them together! God’s plan began a long time before we ever knew! I am so amazed at

how many things were confirmed with our adoption of this beautiful little girl.

McKenna came home to a big family. We now have six children—five daughters and one son, a “surprise” after 14 years of being told there was a 99 percent certainty we would not get pregnant! All our girls are adopted, three through Holt and the China program. Our oldest two are now grown and were adopted in the United States at birth.

We have been open to God’s plan for our family, and it has definitely grown through the years. Our little girls are all 14 months apart and keep me very busy, but I love it. At the end of the day I am a good kind of tired. My husband is an optometrist, and I stay home to care for our children.

When we decided to adopt from China we thought we would adopt twice. God had other plans.... When we received our second daughter, Mackenzie, on December 28, 2004, and went to her orphanage, we decided we should adopt again. Little did we know that our daughter, Yu JiaoJiao, had just been born in the Jilin Province on Dec. 16, and 2½ years later we would be traveling to get her.

She has been cared for and loved from the beginning, and you were a part of that. We love her very much and wanted you to know where she is now. We are grateful to you. May God bless you and your family and all the children waiting for their forever families. ■

Editor’s Note: This is an excerpt from Kelli’s blog, which you can visit at: www.babyjellybeans.com (Name: McKenna Graf; Password: princess3)

How Sponsorship Helps a Child in Holt Care

Because of those generous souls who sponsor children in Holt overseas programs, many children are able to stay out of institutions. The vast majority of children in Holt care in China are being cared for by trained foster families.

The child updates that come several times each year through Holt’s Child Sponsorship Program let sponsors keep up with the progress of their sponsored child, and when a child is adopted by a permanent family, that family also receives the file of child reports that lets them know something more of the history of their child, a precious record for both the family and the child.

—Holt staff

McKenna (l) with sisters Michaela and Mackenzie.



Open to Some Unknowns

“This statement, at the end of each paragraph when you click on a Waiting Child photo on the Holt website, is more profound than I would ever have guessed.”

by Ginger Goad
Franklin, Tennessee

Top right: Ginger Goad
holds her daughter, Anna.
Below: Anna in the midst
of life.

When I was 33 years old, I realized that I was ready to be a mother. I began the process of adoption. I had known I would adopt since I was 13 years old and was told that I would never be able to give birth. I also knew from the beginning of the adoption process that I did not care if my child were a boy or a girl, what his or her race was, or where he or she was born. I just wanted a child of my own to love, a child that needed a mommy. I also knew that I was willing to adopt a child with special healthcare needs.

Children with special needs are harder to place. I don't know why. I think it must be because of the “unknowns.” But as an educator, I am fortunate to know about early development and what children need. I also know that I grew up with an uncle and a sister with special needs. So this was not a world that was completely foreign to me.

After discussing this with my homestudy agency, Miriam's Promise in Nashville, Tennessee, I felt I was ready to go further. I went straight to Holt International. I knew of Holt because my mother had worked with a lady that adopted a little girl from Korea. This lady had gone through Holt International and had a great experience. So here it was, 20 years later, and I was looking Holt up on the Web.

I started with an application packet and quickly called to indicate that I was interested in a waiting child. Holt calls their children with special healthcare needs “Waiting Children,” and this touched me. I was a waiting mom, so a waiting child would be perfect. In the Waiting Child packet there was a list of special needs that a child could have. As a prospective parent, you are to mark what special needs you feel you can handle. This was a difficult list to complete, because by marking it, I knew I would be limiting my options and ruling out some children.

But I prayed over the checklist and pondered what I know. I know that I live 30 minutes from Vanderbilt Children's Hospital and the wealth of experts that are there. I know I had a supportive family, one that knows how to handle special needs. And I know that I am a strong-willed and determined person.

This is what I do not know: I do not know if I will get married. I do not know if I will be able to have



someone to help me 24/7 with a severely disabled child. And I really do not know how far I can push myself. But I marked the list and sent it back.

But what happens when you see your child's face for the first time? Everything! In September 2003, I was looking online at Holt's Waiting Child photolistings (www.holtinternational.com/waitingchild/photolisting), as I did daily. Doing this is not an easy task. The children are all so cute and they all need loving homes. How do you even begin to choose? And what I learned on that fall day is that you don't. Your child finds you. And I saw her. There she was looking right at me from the computer screen. I had been praying that God would make this task easier and He had answered my prayer loud and clear. There she was: GO3-0095.

She was a little girl born on October 1, 2002. The paragraph stated she was “energetic” and “loves to play.” She had albinism and photophobia. “She awaits a loving family who is knowledgeable about the needs of a child with albinism and is open to some unknowns.” What unknowns?

Well, I did not even care... this was my daughter. I really did not read the paragraph as much as I studied that picture. It was a picture of a little girl, with hands balled up in fists. It was a picture of a little girl who was not happy at all. I could tell she had spunk. That's my girl! Every fiber in my being knew she was mine.

So I immediately called Holt and asked about GO3-0095. I was told her name was Lin Xin Miao, and she was in China. I told the lady at Holt I was interested in being matched with her. As Holt began their process, I began mine. I searched, read and talked to parents of children with albinism. I became an expert on albinism. I learned about photophobia. I even spoke with my doctor, who is also a pediatri-

cian, about albinism and photophobia. I felt good about handling this. It's all about sun protection. And being a red-haired person with fair skin myself, I know about sun protection. I also discovered that many times, vision impairment goes hand and hand with albinism. But maybe Anna would not have any vision concerns.

Yes, I did it. I had chosen her name—Anna. Anna is my mother's name. My mother grew up helping raise her brother who had special healthcare needs. My mother raised a daughter with spina bifida. My mother is strong and able to overcome, and Anna needed this name. But would she be mine to name? Would I be able to handle her knowns and unknowns? Maybe the adoption committee would not agree that Anna was my daughter, and she would be better off with another family...

As Anna and I celebrated our three-year adoption anniversary on August 24, 2007, I thought I would share some of our knowns and unknowns. Anna is truly a playful, energetic and strong-willed little girl. Her grandmother and I are amazed daily just how much she is like me. My daughter is determined, loving and has a passion for life. She is stubborn as a mule at times, but so am I. And we both need to be sometimes.

In May 2007, Anna was diagnosed with autism. Anna is also vision impaired. These are the unknowns I was supposed to be open to. But who can truly ever be prepared for unknowns. Whether you are carrying a baby inside you, adopting a healthy child or a child with special healthcare needs, there are always unknowns. But you know what, it does not matter. Anna is mine.

She was mine from the moment I laid eyes on her, even before that. God made her for me, and me for her. It did not matter, and does not matter, what time will unveil. I would not change her and how much I love her. Do I wish she did not have to struggle? Yes. Do I wish that I did not have to fight for everything she needs? Yes. But she is perfect. God does not make mistakes.

Anna is a happy, loving child. She goes to bed singing and wakes up singing. She has learned to give big hugs, and they are more valuable than gold. She goes to school and loves it. She rides horses and loves it. She loves French fries, macaroni and cheese and game shows. I am blessed that my life is filled with unknowns. I do not want someone to tell me what my child can and cannot do. Or what she will or will not be able to do. She will determine that. Her vision impairment, albinism, autism and personality will determine that. That's who I love, and that's what I know.

Thank you Holt for giving me the honor of parenting my daughter. Thank you for giving me a heap of unknowns that keeps me on my toes. Raising a child knowing that unknowns are around every corner makes me a stronger woman. Not expecting unknowns could have blown me away. Watch out world, Anna is coming. She is a true blessing from God, and He makes no mistakes.

May your life be blessed with many unknowns. And may there be no more Waiting Children. ■

From Anna's Grandma

Anna, so much has happened in the three years since you arrived home from China. I have watched as you grew from a cute, curious toddler to a precious, precocious 5-year-old girl.

I have watched as you adjusted to the changes in lifestyle needed to protect you because you were born with albinism. And I have marveled at the strong determination and patience you show as you face the challenges of being legally blind.

God has a plan for your life. He has blessed you with a forever family that loves you unconditionally. He has given you a love for people, a bright smile, an incredible infectious laugh, a will of steel, a spirit of joy and a love of music. So I trust your future to God's plan.

Recently you have started going to your bedroom at night, turning off the lights and closing the door. When I enter to check on you, I find you standing in your bedroom window staring into the black of night. Sometimes you stand there for a long time... silent and still.

Then last night as I sat in your dark room with you, I heard you say, "Moon!" As I



Grandma Sherree and Anna playing with the shades.

looked into the evening sky, I saw that you were looking at a beautiful harvest moon. Then softly and slowly, you started to sing a sweet lullaby. I did not recognize the tune, and I could not understand the words.

I wondered if you were singing in Mandarin, your language of origin?

I dared not move because I did not want to disturb you. I wanted to listen to your beautiful, melodic voice sing forever.

Then, after singing the lullaby four or five

times, you changed the words to the last line of the song, and you sang, "Far, far away... far, far away."

And then I wondered if one of the caregivers at the orphanage cuddled you and showed you the moon?

I wondered if she sang the sweet lullaby to you.

I wondered if she taught you the last words of the song in English, once she learned that your forever mother was coming from America to get you.

I will never know the answer to these questions or the many other questions that I have about your first two years of life in China. I accept that.

But I can dream and I can pray that far, far away in China, an orphaned baby girl will be cuddled and shown the moon. I pray that someone will sing a sweet lullaby to the waiting child. And I pray that one day soon the waiting child will sing the beautiful song to her forever mother.

—Sherree Anna Sauer / Anna's grandma



Sanjith



Han-gyeol



Rachel

Waiting Children

Special needs, special blessings

These children and many others you can view on Holt's website need adoptive families. They may have various challenges such as medical conditions, or they may simply be older or in sibling groups, but they have so much to offer the family who makes them their own son or daughter.

Interested in a Waiting Child? Contact Holt's Waiting Child Program at 541-687-2202. View a photolisting of other waiting children or apply online: holtinternational.org/waitingchild

Sanjith

Born in India, July 26, 2007

A social, happy child, Sanjith started having seizures when he was 6 days old. A hearing test showed moderate hearing impairment on both sides, and he has some vision impairment. He has excellent head control and normal reflexes. *\$5,000 grant available from Brittany's Hope.

Han-gyeol

Born in Korea, December 26, 2006

Born prematurely, this sweet boy has motor, hearing and speech delays. He can pull to a standing position, responds to his name, plays peek-a-boo and says single syllables. *\$5,000 grant available from Brittany's Hope.

Rachel

Born in China, April 14, 2006

Rachel responds to her name and is attached to her caretakers. Her favorite activities are listening to music and playing with toys. She has a developmental delay and is receiving rehabilitation for a missing left eye.

Ginel and Jayquito

Born in the Philippines, Nov. 11, 2000 and June 5, 1999

These brothers lost their mother soon after the youngest boy's birth and have been in care since August 2004 because of their father's neglect. Both boys are openly happy at the prospect of being adopted and are described as

friendly and cooperative. Jayquito loves to tell stories, but his speech is hard to understand.

Mayur

Born in India, July 4, 2007

A social baby who can turn himself and sit with support, Mayur was born prematurely and admitted to the hospital for jaundice and genital abnormalities. A chromosome analysis showed a 46 XY karyotype.

Doug

Born in China, June 18, 2005

Smart and cute, Doug is attached to his caretakers and enjoys being held. Found at about 1 month old, he had myelomeningocele upon admission, and rachischisis, for which he has not had any treatment. *\$5,000 grant available from Brittany's Hope.

Marcy

Born in Haiti, January 27, 2004

This beautiful girl came into care in November because her birth parents could not support her and wanted her to have a better life. She is healthy; meets expectations for motor, language and social development; does well in school and enjoys being around other children.

Sandy

Born in the Philippines, Sept. 22, 1998

Found wandering the streets in 2002, Sandy had a high fever on admission and was malnourished, with a swollen ear. Small compared

to others his age, he is in good health aside from an occasional fever. Expressive in his thoughts and feelings, respectful in his home, he loves to share stories and is said to have advanced mental development. *\$5,000 grant available from Brittany's Hope.

Abha

Born in India, October 19, 2006

A sweet girl who can sit without support, Abha can also stand and walk with support, and follow simple directions. Surgery or the use of a hearing aid is suggested for moderate to severe hearing loss. She also has dysmorphism, nerve palsy on the right side of her face, a VSD and deformed and low-placed ears.

Chuck

Born in SE Asia, February 18, 2007

A charming boy with good hand control, Chuck responds with cooing and smiling and recognizes foster family members' faces. He has developmental delays in language and gross motor. *\$5,000 grant available from Brittany's Hope.

Lindsay

Born in China, November 10, 1999

Lindsay is deaf in both ears, but the foster family she joined in July 2005 is teaching her sign language. Independent in her daily tasks, she has some physical delays. *\$5,000 grant available from Brittany's Hope.

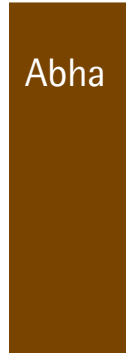
Holt's descriptions of waiting children are based on information available to Holt from caregivers and medical personnel in the child's country of origin. Holt cannot guarantee the accuracy of these descriptions or that the medical and psychological diagnoses published here are correct and complete.



Ginel



Jayquito



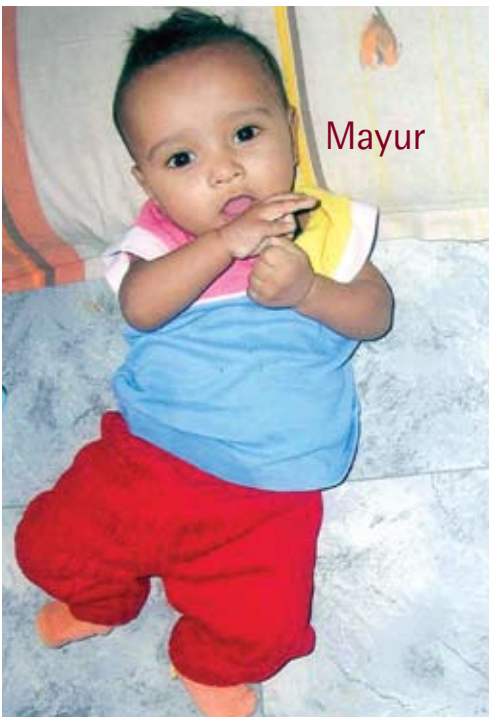
Abha



Lindsay



Chuck



Mayur



Marcy



Angelina, 4

Despite her autism, Angelina has a happy disposition that she shares openly. Her bright, luminous eyes are a clear barometer of the excitement and curiosity with which she approaches life. Already she is beginning to display affection through hugs and touching faces, cheek to cheek. By using signs and cards, she communicates her needs to others. Angelina loves to climb, run and exert herself. She also has a more delicate side, and is fond of pretty things and fancy clothing.

Oregon Waiting Child

Agencies reduce fees for the adoption of a child in state care, and financial assistance may be available. To learn more, call the Special Needs Adoption Coalition at The Boys and Girls Aid Society at (877) 932-2734 x 2392, or DHS at (800) 331-0503. Also visit www.boysandgirlsaid.org and www.nwae.org for information and photos of waiting children.



Doug



Sandy

*Brittany's Hope grants are available for nine months from their granting date, which varies by child. Find out more at www.brittanyshope.org

Loss After Loss

Adopted herself, an adoptive mom who is also a Christian pastor shines a light into the darkness of the deep sense of loss often experienced by adoptees

by Rev. Margot Starbuck
Durham, North Carolina

Child's Play

My 3-year-old son clutches his dark and light-skinned "Little People" as I watch him play on the floor. He babbles a rambling narrative about the drama unfolding in the lives of the molded plastic characters. His tiny fists move the thick figures between a bright yellow school bus and a blue, still damp, bathscum-covered boat.



Vintage Fisher Price
Little People

When I was a kid, the Fisher Price figures used to be smaller, 3/4-inch wide, made of wood. Their girth has increased, I suspect, to protect the windpipes of curious children.

My son, adopted a year earlier, carefully lays a small plastic boy down to sleep, covering him with his own favorite blanket.

He announces, "He misses his mom."

"Really?" I wonder aloud. "Where did his mommy go?"

My son tells me that he does not know.

I believe him, for I too was raised in a closed adoption.

Sinister Voices

Fresh out of grad school, my groom and I are cuddled together in front of a warm fire watching television. During a commercial he leaves for what I assume is a quick snack from the kitchen.

When the program begins again I holler, "It's O-N-N-N!"

No reply.

He hadn't said he was leaving the house had he? I glanced out the window, thinking he might have gone out for firewood. Did he tell me about an errand? We lived across the street from the church where he worked, so perhaps he'd run over to get something. My mind scanned anxiously to fill the void.

I now know that another woman would have called out for him again. She might even have run upstairs to look around. Perhaps, noticing his absence, she would have simply continued to enjoy the show. It was, after all, his loss.

I was not that woman.

Panicky moments turned to what can only be described as terror. Emotionally bereft and physically incapable, I felt pinned to the couch. So sorely limited, I could no more verbalize my wonderings or rise to go find my husband than if I'd been a newborn. Though I'd later learn that he'd gotten to tinkering in the garage, he'd been as good as dead to me.

Had a concerned parental voice asked me, "Where did the lady's husband go?" I would have simply spit out, "I don't know."

Eye-Opening

It wasn't until I got married that I first began to face the impact of my own early losses. After a week in the hospital with my birthmother, I spent two weeks in foster care before going home with my forever family.

Forever lasted five years.

When my adoptive parents divorced, my father took a job across the country. Each parent remarried within a year or two. Both subsequent marriages ended in divorce before I'd turned 16.

Loss after Loss.

The way I weathered those losses for years was by smiling and acting as if they didn't hurt. Though my husband was the first to weather the fissure in my protective emotional armor, now ruptured by our forever marriage bond, others close to me would also begin to experience my adult anxieties.

While waiting in a friend's driveway to go out to a movie together I experienced the familiar absence-evoked concerns. Didn't we say we were going to meet here at seven? Where is she? I don't think we said we would meet at the theater....

I knew the watch-glancing anxiety while waiting alone for a church meeting I'd organized to begin. Where is everyone? Did I tell them the right place? I'm sure this is the right night....

I even felt the angst, for years, when my brother's cell phone would cut out, leaving painful silence at the other end. Since he lived in the mountainous

Helping Your Child Deal with Loss

Imagine that you are an infant. Imagine that you experience the most terrible loss that could happen in your young life—the loss of your birth mother. As a helpless infant, you are dependent for your very survival on your mother or other primary caregiver.

The loss of this figure is literally analogous to death in the minds of young children. Remember, an infant cannot even walk or talk yet.

The terror that Ms. Starbuck describes in her eloquent article has a name. The professionals call it “fear of abandonment.” In my mind, the term is lacking because it does not adequately convey that this feeling of abandonment is equated with survival itself. Adoptees, who have by definition lost their primary caregiver, (along with anyone who has had a significant disruption or trauma) can be susceptible to this awful feeling. It is indeed incapacitating. It is almost impossible to verbalize because the event that triggered it took place before the person was verbal. This may also explain why it feels impossible to move or to take action.

As adoptive parents, what can we do to allay this fear? We know it is most likely to occur in the wake of transitions, separations, loss, anniversaries of important events, and any perceived rejection.

- Maximize opportunities to give lots of affection. Children with fear of abandonment need to know that you love them and are not going to leave them. While verbal assurances are excellent reinforcement, it is essential that the child also feel your presence and the stability of the relationship with you.
- Consider allowing your child to sleep in your room (or vice versa). Though some parents may not be comfortable with this, it can minimize the effects of the transition to sleep. The panic that can arise if the child is awakened during the night may be lessened if you are right there.
- Consider “time ins.” Though many parents are familiar with “time outs,” to a child with an insecure attachment, “time outs” can easily be perceived as yet another rejection. In a “time in” the parent explains the misbehavior, but stays with the child instead of banishing them to the corner or their room.
- Your child may sometimes have conflicted feelings regarding birth parents or being adopted. Try to be comfortable with whatever feelings your child may throw at you. Your child will then know that even if he/she is angry or sad, you aren't going anywhere.

—Patricia McConnell, MSW
Director of Social Services, Korea & Ethiopia

Northwest, it happened more often than I would have liked.

Eventually, I stopped calling.

If absence is the danger faced by all children, I had swallowed it whole.

Bathroom Breakdown

Recently Debra, another adoptive mom, and I chatted over coffee. I could tell from her weary expression that she was confounded by her daughter's behavior. I pursed my lips and listened carefully with the trained ear of a professional adoption detective.

“Saturday morning,” Debra began, “Lindsey woke up and waddled into the kitchen wearing a dirty pull-up. I know how fragile she can be before she eats, so very gently I offered to help her.”

She continued, “We locked the bathroom door to keep the other girls out and got her all cleaned up. Because I was holding the dirty wipes and pull-ups I said, ‘I'll throw this stuff away, and you can flush and put on new underpants. We both need to wash our hands.’ She seemed fine.”

I could tell by my friend's tone that things were about to take a turn for the worse.

“Phil and I were in the kitchen,” she explained, “when we heard her scream. We ran down the hall toward the bedroom and found her still standing in the bathroom, unharmed. No one else was even in there! It's like she was frozen, holding her underpants and babbling something we couldn't even understand.”

“So what had happened?” I asked. I was on the edge of my seat.

“I don't know! The only word we could understand was hand.”

Bingo! It was the clue that broke the case.

“Debra, I think Lindsey was waiting for you to come back and wash your hands together.”

Debra's expression revealed she was baffled.

I knew, in my bones, that the glue holding Lindsey to the floor was more powerful than any felled armoire or cutting sword. I knew what it was to wait, wait, wait, assuming that the desired caregiver would return. I knew the disorienting confusion when the longed-for face fails to appear. I knew what it was to long for the person who is supposed to encircle you, press

liquid soap into your hand, and help you get clean.

“Well she could have just come gotten me,” Debra reasoned, exasperated.

“No,” I explained gently, “She couldn't.”

Faces of Hope in the Face of Loss

As a person of faith, my prayer for Lindsey is that her deep insides, that have come to anticipate absence instead of presence, would be transformed.

In the last six years, I have experienced redemptive “unsticking” as the Divine Face, the One who does not fail, was made known through human ones. I've seen the Divine Face in the face of a therapist and in the faces of prayer warriors. I've seen it fleshed out in the countenance of a husband whose gracious eyes say, “Of course I'd never leave you.” I've heard it in the voice of a brother returning an interrupted phone call. I've known it through the tender assurance of Christian sisters, both adoptive mothers, who were the first ones to find me, unnerved, waiting for our church meeting to begin. Through these human faces I have known God's steadfast presence with me.

I know it in my bones. ■



Kelsey Dunham, 13, holds a child in care at the Jeonju Baby Home.

Raising a New Roof

In December, my mom and I went on Holt's Christmas Gift Team to hand out gifts to children in South Korea. We met about 14 other people who also wanted to make a difference. When we came into the rooms of the children to hand out Christmas presents, the kids jumped up and down trying to grab a present to see if it was theirs to open. It brought joy to our faces to see that the people taking care of the children gave so much love to each and every child.

So in the busy five days we were there we visited seven places: a luncheon for foster mothers, a day at Holt's Ilsan Center for handicapped people, Holt's Reception Center for babies, the Jeonju Baby Home, an unwed mother's home and two community centers in Busan. This trip was amazing and I will never forget it. Everyone on the trip bonded so well.

The Jeonju Baby Home was one of the places where we brought presents to the children. This home is for children 5 years and under and has a few paid staff and many, many volunteers. The children are there because their family is having a problem. We hope that the child can go back to their family, but

for some reason if they can't then they would be adopted domestically.

I was amazed to see the baby home was so nice and clean and how the volunteers just showed their care and love for the children. But when we found out that there's a problem with the roof of the Jeonju Baby Home, I made a goal to raise \$9,000 for the roof by February 9 because we would like to get the roof fixed before the rainy season. That's because the rain seeps through the roof into where the children sleep, play and eat.

For two months I had been saving my money for a new phone, but when I found out how much the roof repair would cost I decided to donate the \$200 I'd saved to the roof, and I will wait to get my new phone until later.

—Kelsey Dunham / Brush Prairie, Washington

Editor's note: Thirteen-year-old Kelsey Dunham succeeded in raising funds totaling \$9,000 to be used for the building of a new roof at the Jeonju Baby Home.

A Daughter's Gift

When Holt adoptee Kelly Kaat, 44, found out that her mom needed a new kidney, she was among seven family members and church associates who agreed to be tested as a possible donor. The likelihood of being a match was a longshot, but if Kelly could save her mother's life, she wanted to do it. And so she did, last summer at a hospital in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

The only suitable donor in the test group, Kelly was matter-of-fact about her courageous choice. She did not want to lose her mom to kidney disease, she said. Both women recovered well from the surgery.

Kelly knows adoption from two sides, as an adopted child and an adoptive parent. Married, with two daughters and a stepson, she adopted one of her girls from China.

"It doesn't matter how you came into this world," Kelly explained. "Whether you were adopted, or whether you entered a family as a birth child, God has a purpose for your life, and this was part of his plan for me."

Her grateful mom, Kathy Ringel, described the match as a "miracle." Initially Kathy did not agree to the idea of a transplant because she did not think she could make it through the surgery. But she came to peace about it, she said, with an understanding that whatever happened it was part of God's plan.



Holt adoptee Kelly Kaat with her mother, Kathy Ringel.

Kathy said she felt called to tend to homeless children after turning her life over to God in 1969. She already had five birth children when she became an adoptive mom. Kelly came to her from a disrupted adoption and is one of three Korean children she adopted. Over the years, Kathy Ringel also cared for 12 long-term foster children with special needs, one of whom she adopted.

With her new lease on life, she said, she has much to look forward to, including weddings, family births, and more time with her husband, children and 32 grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Wedding Bells

Once in awhile... right in the middle of an ordinary life, love gives us a fairytale.

This is the story of two Holt adoptees who met in their homeland of Korea, fell in love and married. Rachel, the daughter of Mike and Linda Mueller of Littleton, Colorado, and Jason, the son of Bev and Sondra Opdyke of La Selva Beach, California, met in October 2000, in Seoul, Korea, at a college fair. After college graduation, Rachel moved to Seoul and taught English to high school students during the second year on a Fulbright grant. She was planning to apply to graduate schools in the United States for the following year. Jason graduated from Santa Clara University and moved to San Francisco, where he had just started a new job as an international admissions counselor at the University of San Francisco. He was on the second leg of his first international recruiting trip, and it was also his first visit to Korea and his birthplace.

At the college fair, Rachel stopped to talk to a woman recruiter whose home, like hers, was in the Denver area. Rachel wanted to know if they shared any connections. When Rachel related her story of adoption, it was like *déjà vu* for the recruiter, who knew Jason. When she realized their stories were so much alike, she sent Rachel over to meet him. After chatting for a bit, Rachel offered to show Jason around Seoul for a few hours. Somewhere between eating pork cutlet and drinking beer, dancing on the DDR (dancing video game), and walking along the neon-lit streets of the city, they both realized they liked each other. But the next day Jason was off to another city on his tour, and Rachel was to still be in Korea another nine months. They exchanged e-mail addresses and promised to write, but neither knew if this was the start of some spicy kimchi, or just two soju carts passing in the night.

So what happened? Well, Jason and Rachel did keep in touch through e-mail and phone calls. Jason visited Rachel and her family in their home state, and Rachel visited Jason in San Francisco. When Rachel came back to the United States, she attended graduate school in Washington, D.C.

Jason and Rachel maintained a long-distance relationship for the next three years, flying back and forth every month to see each other. Finally, in November 2004, Jason accepted a job at American University in D.C. Jason and Rachel were finally together living in the same state!

About a year later Rachel received an offer to join the next U.S. Department of State Foreign Service class in January 2006. They both knew how long Rachel had been waiting for this offer, and they also knew they didn't want another long distance relationship. The pressure was on. Thanksgiving weekend Jason and Rachel flew to California to stay with Jason's family. The day after Thanksgiving, they drove to San Francisco, where Jason led Rachel to one of his favorite spots near the house where he used to live. It was on a rocky cliff overlooking the Pacific Ocean, with a fantastic view of the Golden Gate Bridge in the distance. There Jason proposed, and of course, Rachel said yes!

The engagement didn't last long...only about two weeks. Once they decided to marry, they needed to move fast to make sure Jason could accompany Rachel overseas on her first U.S. government assignment. On December 9, 2005, they were married in Arlington, Virginia. Because they were not able to share their special day with friends and family, they later shared their wedding celebration in the Colorado Rocky Mountains over Labor Day Weekend 2006.

Jason and Rachel left D.C. and headed to their new home in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon), Vietnam, October 2006. Rachel's first assignment for the U.S. government is for two years in the Vietnam Consulate, and Jason accepted a position with the University of San Francisco as the Director of International Relations, where his home office is in Bangkok, Thailand.

— Sondra Opdyke / La Selva Beach, California



Rachel Mueller and Jason Opdyke holding the flag of Vietnam. Rachel is currently on assignment in Vietnam for the U.S. State Department—she recently found out her next assignment will be as Vice Consul for the U.S. Embassy in Seoul, South Korea.



Iraq Service

Captain Kimberly deBeauclair recently returned from her second tour of duty in Iraq. While there, she was Commanding Officer of a medical company. Adopted from Korea through Holt International by Mr. and Mrs. Ralph deBeauclair, Kimberly deBeauclair joined the U.S. Army in 1990 after finishing high school. As a paratrooper, she broke her ankle and ended up with permanent screws to hold it in place. At the University of Texas at El Paso, she earned a degree in kinesiology (the study of sports medicine), completed the ROTC program and then reentered the Army as an officer.

International House of Adoption

An adoptive family discovers a link to earlier adoptions through the house they live in

Jia and I sat out on the deck eating lunch on a warm fall day. It had been a year since Troy and I traveled to China to bring home our precious daughter. Jia was now 3½, speaking in full sentences, sweet and outgoing, with unimaginable energy and intense affection. What a journey this past year of crash course parenthood had been—but how good!

I pulled myself out of my reverie and saw an old man standing at our gate with a camera. “Can I take a picture of your house?” he asked. “I built it 57 years ago.”

Because we live in an odd, mountain cabin-like A-frame that is slightly out of place in the Sierra foothills, I was thrilled to meet the builder. We had so many questions of why and how he built it.

Once inside he said, “We raised five kids here. We got mixed up with a guy named Harry Holt and flew to Korea, bringing home two children with us. We already had two biological children and this adoption was so good, we adopted another Chinese boy and later two Native American boys.”

My jaw hung open as I stuttered that we had brought Jia home the year before through Holt International, from China’s Waiting Child Program. My husband and I marveled at the story. But that wasn’t the end.

We live in a small town, in a rural county of Northern California. The only Asians we ever see are the other adopted kids Jia’s age. One day as we were out walking our dog, a car passed by. The driver was Asian—what was the likelihood of that in our town? The car passed by again. The third time the driver stopped—“Is that your daughter? Did you adopt her? You wouldn’t believe it but I grew up on this street!”



Kimberly, Troy and Jia Dickson. Jia was adopted from Inner Mongolia, China.

But I did believe it. He must be one of the Korean adoptees who grew up in our house. “Yes, your dad came by to see our house a few months ago.”

This time his jaw dropped. “You live in the A-frame?”

Our stories came tumbling out, as we invited him and his friend, another adult Holt adoptee, into our house to share stories. He brought out the newspaper article from December 1963 of when he first came home.

What was the likelihood of our buying an odd A-frame house that 45 years ago had become home to Asian adoptees? Their experiences had helped pave the way for our own family’s formation, as they were part of the force that lobbied our government for international adoption friendly laws.

We have Jia and are now waiting for a sister from India. Only God knows what’s beyond that, but He clearly led us to an adoption house!

—Kimberly Dickson / Placerville, California

Celebrating Lunar New Year

Five of us Holt families who live in the San Francisco area celebrated the children’s Korean and Chinese cultures this year through the Lunar New Year holiday.

We purchased a few books on how the holiday is traditionally celebrated and put together our party. The children dressed in their traditional costumes (Korean hanboks and Chinese cheongsam, or qipao). Honoring the Korean custom known as sebae, the children bowed to their parents to show respect. We gave our children gifts of socks, clothes or shoes as well as a small amount of money.

We shared traditional games and families brought Korean and Chinese food to share, including kimchi and potstickers. Everyone especially loved ttok-kuk, a homemade, Korean rice cake soup traditionally eaten during the Lunar New Year celebration.

—Jan Ahrens / Los Altos, California



Front row, left to right: Mari Yamashita (3, China), Elizabeth Ahrens (4, Korea), Jadon Gee (4, Korea), Alex West (4, Korea). • Back row, left to right: Cassie Knoth (4, China), Michael Yamashita (5, Korea), Ken Yamashita (6, Korea), Kayla Gee (9), Thomas Ahrens (6).

Arkansas

June—**Quarterly Info/Recruiting Meeting** for prospective and existing adoptive families. RSVP to Lynn Sims at (501) 723-4444 for details.

California

May 17—**Holt Family Picnic** at El Dorado East Regional Park, Long Beach, 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Contact: Sally Dunbar at sallyd@holtinternational.org or (888) 355-HOLT x137

June 7—**Sacramento Area Holt Family Picnic** at Royer Park, Roseville, 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Contact: Sally Dunbar at sallyd@holtinternational.org or (888) 355-HOLT x137

June 14—**Bay Area Holt Family Picnic** at Coyote Point Park, San Mateo, 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Contact: Sally Dunbar at sallyd@holtinternational.org or (888) 355-HOLT x137

August 3–7—**Holt Adoptee Camp** in Dobbins for adoptees 9–16 years old. Contact: Steve Kalb at (541) 687-2202 or stevek@holtinternational.org

Florida

October 18—**Holt Family Picnic** at Children's Home Society campus, Jacksonville. 11 a.m.–2 p.m. Contact: Sally Dunbar at sallyd@holtinternational.org or (888) 355-HOLT x137

October 19—**Holt Family Picnic** at Barber Park at Lake George, Orlando. 3–6 p.m. Contact: Sally Dunbar at sallyd@holtinternational.org or (888) 355-HOLT x137

Georgia

October 4—**Atlanta Area Holt Family Picnic** at Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Marietta. 3 p.m. Contact: Sally Dunbar at sallyd@holtinternational.org or (888) 355-HOLT x137

Illinois

August 16—**Chicago Area Holt Family Picnic** at Veterans Memorial Park, Westmont, 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Contact: Sally Dunbar at sallyd@holtinternational.org or (888) 355-HOLT x137

Iowa

September 20—**Iowa Holt Family Picnic** at LeGrand Community Park, LeGrand, 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Contact: Sally Dunbar at sallyd@holtinternational.org or (888) 355-HOLT x137

Kansas / Missouri

September 27—**Holt Family Picnic** at Harmon Park, Prairie Village, Kansas. 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Contact: Sally Dunbar at sallyd@holtinternational.org or (888) 355-HOLT x137

Nebraska

July 26—**Holt Family Picnic** at Cooper Memorial Farm, Omaha. 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Contact: Sally Dunbar at sallyd@holtinternational.org or (888) 355-HOLT x137

July 27–31—**Holt Adoptee Camp** in Ashland for adoptees 9–16 years old. Contact: Steve Kalb at (541) 687-2202 or stevek@holtinternational.org

New Jersey

July 14–18—**Camp Friendship Korea** at Shrine of St. Joseph in Stirling for campers entering kindergarten to eighth grade the following September. Go to: www.campfriendshipnj.com

July 21–25—**Camp Friendship China** at Shrine of St. Joseph in Stirling for campers entering kindergarten to eighth grade. Go to: www.campfriendshipnj.com

September 6—**New Jersey Holt Family Picnic** at Pine Park, 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Contact: Sally Dunbar at sallyd@holtinternational.org or (888) 355-HOLT x137

Ohio

May 10—**International Adoption Information and Options** at Nationwide Children's Hospital Education Center, 575 South 18th St., Columbus. 10 a.m.–noon. Featuring Holt International's Waiting Child Program. For more information, contact Marcia Kiggins at (740) 965-4445 or Susie Doig at susied@holtinternational.org or (541) 687-2202

Oregon

May 9—**Holt Colors of Hope Dinner Auction** to benefit children in care in Southeast Asia, at the Valley River Inn in Eugene. Contact: Monica Wilton, Holt Events Manager, at monicaw@holtinternational.org or (800) 451-0732

June 28—**Holt Family Picnic** at Washington Park, Portland. Contact: Sally Dunbar at sallyd@holtinternational.org or (888) 355-HOLT x137

July 20–24—**Holt Adoptee Camp** in Corbett for adoptees 9–16 years old. Contact: Steve Kalb at (541) 687-2202 or stevek@holtinternational.org

August 2—**Oregon Holt Family Picnic** at Camp Harlow, Eugene, 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Contact: Sally Dunbar at sallyd@holtinternational.org or (888) 355-HOLT x137

Pennsylvania

August 10–14—**Holt Adoptee Camp** in Starlight, Pennsylvania, for adoptees 9–16 years old. Contact: Steve Kalb at (541) 687-2202 or stevek@holtinternational.org

In the End, We Could Laugh

At Disney World in Florida, we sat next to an Asian family while waiting out a small rain storm. Once the rain stopped, the family left and got onto the tram. I noticed they had left behind their empty baby carriage, and I decided to take it with us in the hopes of finding them.

My husband and I boarded the next tram, along with our daughter and son who are both adopted from Korea. I told an attendant that an Asian family had left something behind, and pointed to the carriage. His reply was, "Oh my God... I'll call security right away."

I couldn't figure out what made him so upset, until he reached for my daughter's hand and tried to take her away. My husband and I explained that the family had left behind the carriage, but the children were ours. The attendant refused to believe us and called security. Once we talked to a supervisor and explained that the children were adopted, everything was okay. Boy, did we have a good laugh.

—Allison Hudak / Scotch Plains, New Jersey



Justin, 10, and Alexa Hudak, 8, fresh out of the pool on family vacation.

5 Ways YOU CAN HELP CHILDREN IN HOLT'S CARE

1. Give your time and effort

- Help plan, set up and take down: Holt picnics, auctions, fundraisers
- Help sign up new sponsors at a Holt artist concert
- Serve as a Holt Adoptee Camp counselor or camp nurse

2. Share your story—as an adoptive family, adoptee or Holt child sponsor

- At your church
- Civic club, work, school, dorm or other association
- Carry a Holt adoption information card to refer people to Holt
- Write a story for Holt publications or local newspaper
- Write about Holt International in your blog
- Invite friends to a Holt auction or other event

3. Pray

- For the children—health, security, development, placement with permanent families
- For the childcare workers and staff
- For the effectiveness of Holt's programs

4. Meet children's needs financially

- Sponsor a child—\$30 a month helps provide loving care, food, shelter, clothing and medical treatment
- Attend a Holt fundraising auction; donate an item or service to the auction
- Provide a needed item through Holt's Gifts of Hope catalog
- Give a gift in honor or memory of someone dear
- Consider a legacy gift from your estate
- Hold a garage sale, bake sale, etc. to raise funds

5. Connect others to Holt

- Link your website, blog, MySpace or Facebook pages to Holt's website
- Refer potential adoptive families to a Holt adoption webinar



For more information about these opportunities, e-mail info@holtinternational.org

HoltInternational
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