

LSS Adoption Offices

Appleton(800) 577-4100 ext 322
Eau Claire(888) 746-2850
LaCrosse(608) 788-5090
Madison(608) 277-2966
Milwaukee(414) 671-5950
Superior(715) 394-2054 ext. 106
Waukesha(800) 216-3437
Wausau(888) 522-3678
Marquette, MI .(800) 677-7410

www.lssadopt.org

LIFE = LONG

C O N N E C T I O N S

SUMMER 2005 • ISSUE 2

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES • 647 W. VIRGINIA ST., SUITE 300 • MILWAUKEE, WI 53204-1535 • 414.281.4400 • www.lssadopt.org

JOURNEY OF LOVE AND HOPE CANCELLED

Dear Adoptive Families and Donors,

Many of you are aware Lutheran Social Services (LSS) of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan made the very difficult decision to cancel our Russia Summer Camp — Journey of Love and Hope.

Since February, LSS has been awaiting word of our re-accreditation. The Ministry of Education in the Russian Federation has imposed changes governing inter-country adoptions on all adoption agencies working in Russia.

The cancellation of camp has been difficult for all involved. Staff, families, church partners and community persons have worked diligently to heighten awareness of this program, as well as build donations for the support of bringing the children to Wisconsin and Upper Michigan for a family experience.

While we had no choice but to cancel the camp, LSS is committed to bringing the 22 camp children identified to families in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. LSS will place the children from camp with adoptive families who were studied and approved for the placement of these children. In order to do this, now more than ever, requires use of your financial contributions. For those groups and individuals who have so generously given financially to Journey of Love and Hope, we thank you!

If you wish to re-direct your financial contributions to another adoption initiative in the Buryat region, please consider the options of Birth to Three Early Intervention Services or the Refusnik Funds that supports nutritional needs for infant children. And, of course, you may apply your gift toward the Forever Family Fund to help families with the cost of adoption. Finally, you may also request your financial contribution to be sent back to you. Without your contributions, time, and support, older children would not be finding "forever families."

You may contact Deb Renando, coordinator for Buryat program at 715-849-3344 or Liz Schaefer, director of Adoption Services at 414-325-3150 regarding your financial contribution designation.

Sincerely,

Liz Schaefer, MSW, Director of Adoption Services

In 2004, LSS and other organizations joined forces to host three summer camp programs attended by 16 orphans from the Buryat and Novosibirsk regions of Russia. Most of these children have since been adopted by families they met through the experience. LSS first began this camp program in 2003 and was forced to cancel this year's camp as the agency awaits re-accreditation of its Russian adoption program. LSS remains committed to bringing the 22 camp children who would have attended the 2005 program to waiting adoptive families here.



Fire Destroys 17 Manila Homes

LSS adoption coordinator Carol Hakala took the photo at left on one of her many trips to Manila, Republic of the Philippines. These impoverished homes are just a few blocks from Concordia Children's Services, the LSS representative in Manila for adoptive families. Concordia also provides a home for children from birth to about 7-years-old as well as a number of other services for the many families in the community living below poverty level.

In June, LSS received word that 17 homes along these railroad tracks were destroyed by fire. No one was injured, but everything that these families had was destroyed. There were children living in those homes who were back in school because sponsors through Concordia Children's Services purchased school supplies and uniforms for them through its Street School Program. Those gifts were also destroyed, and Concordia is now faced with replacing those precious school supplies and school uniforms as well as helping in any way possible so these 17 families can put their lives back together after this tragedy. No insurance, disaster relief or public funds are available to help.

If you wish to assist Concordia in helping these families or in one of its other ministries, please contact Carol Hakala at 715-833-0992 or chakala@lsswis.org.

To help Concordia Children's Services, contact Carol Hakala at 715-833-0992 or chakala@lsswis.org.

Adoption Questions?



Call the LSS adoption office nearest you.

LSS Update on Mongolia

"Lutheran Social Services has sponsored a Mongolian adoption program for about five years now, and we've helped many infants and young children find their forever families," said Deb Renando, LSS adoption coordinator. "No matter how many placements we make, each new adoption in Mongolia is just as exciting for us as the very first one. It's heartwarming to match a loving family with a child who so desperately wants and needs one."

Renando shared that Lutheran Social Services is currently helping two families facilitate the final stages of their adoptions of Mongolian children. Several others are in the early phases of the process. "There are many children in Mongolia, of all ages, looking for permanency," she said. "So, we are always looking for families who are interested in international adoption."

For more information on LSS' adoption programs in Mongolia or other countries, contact Deb Renando at 715-849-3344 or drenando@lsswis.org.





Coming home from Guatemala

LSS' international adoption program expanded to Guatemala last May, and our first child is now on his way home with his new family. "As in other parts of the world, Guatemala has many children—from infants to older ages—hoping to find permanent homes," said Brenda Koller, LSS adoption coordinator who has worked with the new family throughout the adoption. "LSS is excited to be helping these children find the families they so desperately want."

For information on LSS' Guatemalan adoption program, call Brenda Koller at 715-849-3377.



ESWS Wants Our Help

Information on Korean adoptees needed for database and book

Eastern Social Welfare Society (ESWS) has marked its 30th anniversary of finding forever families for Korean children. In celebration, the organization has asked Lutheran Social Services and other agencies with adoption programs to help spread the word and reach all Korean adoptees and adoptive families about a very special project they have underway.

Below are excerpts of a letter from Dr. Do-young Kim, PhD, MD, president and CEO of Eastern Social Welfare Society, that explains this project and the help they are looking for. To read Dr. Kim's full letter and access a short survey of information requested, visit the LSS web site at www.lssadopt.org. Responses are requested directly to ESWS by September 30, 2005.

"It has been thirty years since Eastern Social Welfare Society started to find homes for Korean children. We are thinking it's high time for us to locate all adult adoptees placed by ESWS, because it is very important to all of us, from caretakers at the babies' home, foster mother's, social workers and others who are involved in adoptees' lives in any way, to know and understand what happens to the children after they are adopted. So we decided to make a database for adoptees whose age is over 18....

...ESWS plans to publish a book of stories of adoptees with special or outstanding histories or experiences. However, publishing a book is not the sole purpose of this project. It will be the start of research ESWS has planned to study the lives of adult adoptees, and we will continue this work on a regular basis."

Sponsors needed in Mongolia

The Mongolia Family Preservation Fund provides money for qualifying families (earning under \$25 a month) to purchase food and other necessities to keep children at home and off the streets. Many international agencies operate "soup kitchens" that provide meals to children living on the streets of Mongolia. For many families, it is tempting to let their children go to the street in order to be fed. Yet once a child goes, he or she typically joins a gang and stays on the streets. Here are three children looking for sponsors through LSS:



Eleven-year-old **Enkbold's** father died in 1999 from liver cancer. His mother was killed in a car accident in 1996. His family is his brother, a student at the Technical University, a sister who lives and works in the countryside, another brother who works in the open market and two siblings in high school.

mother. Her father left the family after a fire destroyed their home. They now live in a small house with her aunt.

Five-year-old **Batzul** is cared for by his mother, a single parent who is unemployed and has no home. His grandparents are gone, and he and his mother spend nights visiting other relatives who cannot afford to care for them long-term.

Purevbat, a 13-year-old girl, is the oldest child of four being supported by a single

For \$300 a year, you can sponsor Enkbold, Purevbat or Batzul (at left) and keep them with their families. To help, contact Deb Renando, 715-849-3344 or drenando@lsswis.org.



Families Celebrate at 2005 Adoption Festival

On June 18, 2005, Lutheran Social Services (LSS) of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan hosted its sixth bi-annual Adoption Festival at the La Crosse Center in La Crosse, Wisconsin. More than 450 people attended this event which celebrates the creation of families through adoption.

"We had a wonderful turnout this year," noted Liz Schaefer, LSS director of adoption services. "Adoption Festival is such a unique opportunity for

everyone to learn about traditions important to so many adopted children and to build connections with other adoptive families."

Special guests included Nancy Hoffman, LSS Guatemala in-country coordinator for Semillas de Amor in Antigua; Dr. Larissa Yurlevna, the chief pediatrician of Orphanage #1 in Novosibirsk; and Beth Caces, executive director of Concordia Children's Services in Manila.

In addition to these international guests, the Mu Daiko Drummers performed along with child entertainer Hans Meyer, caricature artists, and the La Crosse Clown Club twisted balloons for hundreds of children. While the children enjoyed games, crafts and coloring, parents took part in educational sessions on topics such as medical issues, open adoption, and Birth-to-Three services.

"The event also doubled as a fundraiser for us," Schaefer said. "Our guests were able to purchase international gifts at the marketplace or bid on one of over 90 silent auction items. The proceeds raised from these sales will help us aid each international adoption country as well as our own domestic adoption program."

