



The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute
welcomes you to



THE 2007
ANGELS IN ADOPTION
GALA TM

Building
Families through
Adoption



The 2007 Congressional Angels in Adoption™ Gala Program



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Creating Hope and Opportunity

At the Freddie Mac Foundation, we believe where there's opportunity, there's hope. That's why we invest in programs that help increase opportunity by building better lives for children and families. We're proud to support your efforts to bring about better tomorrows.



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Welcome **Barbara Harrison**, Anchor, NBC 4

Invocation **Dr. Barry C. Black**, Chaplain, U.S. Senate

First Course Served

Remarks from CCAI Senate **The Honorable Mary Landrieu**, U.S. Senate and
Congressional Directors **The Honorable Norm Coleman**, U.S. Senate

Message from our Premier & Founding Sponsor **Cheryl S. Clarke**, Director of Foundation Giving
The Freddie Mac Foundation

Main Course Served Slide Presentation of 2007 Angels in Adoption™

Musical Performance **Jim Brickman**

Message from CCAI Executive Director and Congressional Foster Youth Intern
Deanna Carlson Stacy
Agnes Barrios

Dessert Served

Recognition of 2007 Angels in Adoption™ **The Honorable Jim Oberstar**
U.S. House of Representatives
Congressional Director, CCAI

Marcus Samuelsson
Critically Acclaimed Chef and Author

The Honorable Ginny Brown-Waite
U.S. House of Representatives
Congressional Director, CCAI

Alonzo Mourning, Miami Heat
Founder of Alonzo Mourning Charities, Inc.

The Honorable Mary Landrieu, U.S. Senate
Congressional Director, CCAI

Patti LaBelle
Award Winning Artist

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Building Families through Adoption

Message from the Executive Director

Tonight we celebrate our 2007 Angels in Adoption. Congratulations for this honor of distinction from your Member of Congress!

The world's orphans, both in the United States and internationally, are dependent on our combined compassion. With over 100,000 children in the United States' foster care system waiting to be adopted and over one hundred million children around the world without a permanent family, we know the need is great. But each one of you has demonstrated tonight that together we can make a difference. The work we are committed to is challenging. But, as we look into the eyes of each child here tonight, we know our combined effort is lasting. Tens of thousands of children now have a permanent, loving family because of the combined compassion here tonight.

We at CCAI are committed to being that strong voice in Congress for every child who does not have a permanent, loving family. We want to ensure that every child in the world has the same rights American-born children have. This includes children going to bed at night and having a permanent adult in their life who will be there in the morning. This also includes children in the U.S. foster care system having a permanent family as soon as possible. At CCAI, our mission exists so children will be safe and grow to be adults. We know that every child deserves to be loved. And we want every child to have the opportunity to dream about their own bright future.

Thank you for demonstrating in your words and actions that children are worth our deepest sacrifices. The CCAI Board of Directors, my staff, and I thank you for your commitment to us, day after day. But, most of all, we thank you for your commitment to children and for giving them the greatest gift of all – a family.

Blessings to you tonight and thank you. Congratulations, again, to our 2007 Angels in Adoption. We celebrate you tonight!



Deanna Carlson Stacy
Executive Director

History of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute

The Congressional Coalition on Adoption (CCA) was created in 1985 as a bicameral, bipartisan alliance of Members of Congress dedicated to improving adoption policy and practice, and to focusing public attention on the advantages of adoption. In order to support the work of the CCA and more effectively raise Congressional and public awareness about adoption, the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI) was created in 2001. Senator Norm Coleman, Senator Mary Landrieu, Congresswoman Ginny Brown-Waite, and Congressman James Oberstar currently serve as both the Co-Chairs of CCA and the Congressional Directors of CCAI. CCAI is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to raising awareness about the tens of thousands of orphans and foster children in the United States and the millions of orphans around the world in need of permanent, safe, and loving homes through adoption; and to eliminating the barriers that hinder these children from realizing their basic right of a family. CCAI does not apply for or accept federal, state or local government funding.

Core CCAI Programs

The **Angels in Adoption™** Program, CCAI's signature public awareness program, provides an opportunity for all Members of Congress to honor the extraordinary work of their constituents who have enriched the lives of foster children and orphans worldwide. Angels are invited to attend a Washington, D.C. awards ceremony, press conference, and evening Gala given in their honor. In addition to Angels chosen from all 50 states and the District of Columbia, National Angels are recognized for their adoption and foster care advocacy on a global scale. Since the program's inception in 1999, Congressional participation has grown from 133 Members to 193 Members and over 1,100 individuals and organizations have received the Angels in Adoption award of distinction.

The **Congressional Resource Program (CRP)** is CCAI's primary program to educate and serve the Members of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption, Congress' Adoption Caucus, around removing barriers for orphans worldwide and children in the U.S. foster care system who are eligible for adoption. Through strategic briefings, roundtables, and weekly communications, CCAI exists to serve the Members of Congress as they seek to draft positive child welfare legislation and meet their constituents' needs. The CRP programs success has included a 2005 Congressional Roundtable bringing 11 Members of Congress and staffers from 19 additional offices together to discuss their 109th Congress child welfare legislative agenda, a 2006 Congressional Roundtable bringing eight Members of Congress together to discuss court reform, and a 2007 Legislative Roundtable bringing six Members of Congress and 21 staffers together to discuss the Adoption Tax Credit and Foster Care Reform Legislation.

The **CCAI Congressional Delegations** exist to increase positive dialogue and impact change for orphans and foster children among foreign and domestic government officials and U.S. Members of Congress. Since 2001, CCAI has organized Congressional delegation trips to China, Romania, Russia, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Uganda, and India, and has hosted leaders from around the globe in our nation's capital. The lessons learned through these cross-cultural interactions have educated and challenged even the most learned of CCAI's Congressional Members. In January 2007, CCAI hosted a Congressional delegation to four counties in Florida to learn about their foster care system. During the three-day fact finding tour, CCAI and Congressional staff held face-to-face meetings to discuss best practices with local and state legislators, adoption professionals, and adoptive families.

The **Congressional Foster Youth Internship (FYI) Program** provides talented college students who have spent their formative years in foster care an opportunity to intern for a Member of Congress. These young adults bring their unique perspectives and resilient spirits to serve the U.S. Congress while being educated on the internal workings of our legislative branch of government in Washington, D.C. Since the program's inception, over 50 Members of Congress have participated and the program has received widespread accolades from both Congressional offices and the national adoption community.

National Adoption Day (NAD) is a day in November where thousands of children in the U.S. foster care system are adopted. CCAI is proud to be a founding partner of this program which is organized by six national organizations. The NAD Coalition engages local communities to organize events in every state on the Saturday before Thanksgiving to finalize pending adoptions out of foster care and celebrate all adoptive families. CCAI has secured Presidential Proclamations and Congressional participation every year since 2002. For the first time in 2006, National Adoption Day was celebrated in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. In total, more than 250 events were held throughout the country to finalize the adoptions of more than 3,300 children in foster care, and to celebrate all families who adopt. This year's National Adoption Day is Saturday, November 17, 2007.

CCAI Board of Directors

Senator Norm Coleman

Minnesota, Republican

Prior to being elected to the Senate in 2002, Senator Coleman served two terms as the Mayor of St. Paul, Minnesota. Since taking office, Senator Coleman has become a national leader in assisting families with adoptions. Senator Coleman has helped place close to 400 children from over 20 countries into the homes and lives of Minnesota families.

He works with the Office of Children's Issues at the U.S. Department of State and the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services on policy matters to ensure that the adoptions process is as smooth as possible from start to finish. Senator Coleman has worked closely with his colleagues to improve federal adoption laws including, most recently, the passage of a provision sponsored by Senators Coleman and Landrieu (D-LA) that would allow for an adopted foster child's college financial aid eligibility to be determined solely by their ability to pay, regardless of his or her adoptive family's income level.

Senator Coleman is a member of the Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee; the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship; the Foreign Relations Committee; the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations.

Senator Mary Landrieu

Louisiana, Democrat

Senator Landrieu is an adoptive parent to two children, Connor and Mary Shannon. Her husband, Frank, is an adoptee himself. Senator Landrieu has been a leader in the passage of the Adoption and Safe Families Act, the Hope for Children Act (Adoption Tax Credit), the Strengthening the Abuse and Neglect Courts Act, the Intercountry Adoption Act, the D.C. Family Courts Act, and the Child Citizenship Act. She is a member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education; The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the Committee on Small Business.

Representative Ginny Brown-Waite

Florida, Republican

In her third term as a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Congresswoman Ginny Brown-Waite has built a reputation as a strong and tenacious leader with the ability and authority to get things done on behalf of her Florida constituents. During her tenure in Congress, Ginny has earned a reputation as one of the most outspoken, hard-working and dynamic members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

An active member of the Financial Services, Homeland Security and Veterans' Affairs Committees in the 110th Congress, Ginny's work on these panels is a testament to her drive, tenacity and dedication to the people of the 5th District. Ginny also serves as the Republican Co-Chair of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption and as a member of the House Page Board that oversees the Congressional page program.

Ginny is a native of Albany, New York, and an alumna of The State College System. She received her Master's Degree in Public Administration from Russell Sage College and holds a Labor Studies Program Certification from Cornell University. She is a mother to three adult daughters and a grandmother of three grandsons and one granddaughter. Her husband, Harvey, is a retired New York State trooper and together he and Ginny own an MG and are members of the Nature Coast British Car Club. They reside in Brooksville with their Bentley — but don't be impressed; Bentley is their dog!

Representative Jim Oberstar

Minnesota, Democrat

As an adoptive parent and advocate, Representative Jim Oberstar has been a longstanding leader in adoption. As one of the founding Co-Chairs of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption, Representative Oberstar has championed numerous adoption initiatives including the expansion of the Adoption Tax Credit and leave equity for adoptive parents. Representative Oberstar is the Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Cheryl S. Clarke

Director of Foundation Investments and Programs, Freddie Mac Foundation

Cheryl S. Clarke serves as Director of Foundation Investments and Programs for the Freddie Mac Foundation, a corporate foundation which, since 1991, has invested over \$230 million in the non-profit community. Ms. Clarke leads the effort to strengthen the Foundation's community outreach and philanthropic efforts to open the doors of hope and opportunity to our region's children and their families.

Ms. Clarke invests in programs that stabilize children and their families in their home environments and helps them to thrive, there and beyond. With multiple investment strategies, the emphasis is on strengthening and stabilizing vulnerable families to be more independent and self-sufficient; finding permanent homes and connections for children in and aging out of foster care, and enabling youth to reach their full and sustained potential by strengthening and sustaining their academic achievement and preparation for career success. In her role as the Director of the Foundation's grantmaking, Ms. Clarke also provides the vision and direction for the Foundation's key signature initiatives: The Freddie Mac Foundation's National Wednesday's Child program and The JC Nalle Community School in southeast Washington, DC.

Ms. Clarke serves on the boards of the Nonprofit Roundtable of Greater Washington, the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, the Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers and the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation. She is a graduate of the Leadership Greater Washington class of 2004 program.

A long-time employee of Freddie Mac, Ms. Clarke has held numerous management positions as the Director of Administration and Human Resources in the Dallas and Atlanta offices; the first Director of the company's diversity office; Director of Planning and Control leading the planning, budgeting and control functions during construction of the corporate headquarters; and her current position at the Freddie Mac Foundation directing the foundation investment programs. Prior to joining Freddie Mac, Ms. Clarke was the on-site director and teacher at one of the satellite DCPS schools of the Bundy Crisis Intervention Center, a local facility for emotionally and behaviorally troubled boys in Washington, D.C.

Wade F. Horn, Ph.D.

Director, Deloitte Consulting LLP

Dr. Horn joined the public sector practice of Deloitte Consulting LLP in 2007 where he serves as a key advisor to health and human services clients in its state government practice. Prior to coming to Deloitte Consulting, Dr. Horn served from 2001 to 2007 as the Assistant Secretary for the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). In that position, he oversaw a budget of \$47 billion and more than 60 federal programs aimed at improving the well-being of children, including foster care and adoption. In that role, Dr. Horn launched an award-winning public awareness campaign to encourage the adoption of older children from foster care, and assisted in the creation of new federal incentives and supports for adoption. Dr. Horn also served as a member of the U.S. Advisory Board on Kinship Care and was President of the National Fatherhood Initiative — an organization dedicated to improving the well-being of children by increasing the number of children growing up with involved, committed and responsible fathers.

Valdur Koha

Philanthropist

Valdur Koha and his wife, Irene, are the proud parents of five sons: David, Tobias, Michael, Christian and Benjamin. They adopted their daughter, Nicoleta, from Romania. Valdur is a philanthropist from Lexington, Massachusetts and supports many charities from around the world. Valdur founded an internet software company that is now Openwave. He retired a few years ago to devote himself to his family, his charities, and his church.

Paul Singer

Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer, SUPERVALU, Inc.

Singer joined SUPERVALU in 2007 with 27 years of retail experience in IT, merchandising, and inventory and supply chain management. He served as Target Corporation's Chief Information Officer from 2000 to 2005 and was a member of its Executive Committee. While at Target, Singer spearheaded the Target Adoption Network, an internal organization which facilitates Target's involvement in the issue of adoption. He and his wife, Teri, reside in Eden Prairie, MN, and have two biological daughters and three adopted daughters from Russia.

Rita Soronen

Executive Director, The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption is dedicated to elevating the awareness of foster care adoption in the United States and Canada, while providing critical resources to organizations who reflect the Foundation's mission of dramatically increasing the adoptions of children from North America's foster care systems. In her role as Executive Director, and committed to the core beliefs that 1) every child deserves to grow and thrive in a safe and permanent home, 2) no child should linger in foster care or leave the system at age 18 without a family, and 3) no child is unadoptable, Rita Soronen works to ensure Dave Thomas' legacy of making foster care adoption streamlined, affordable and accessible to any family wanting to adopt.

With more than 30 years working on behalf of vulnerable and at-risk children, Ms. Soronen is a requested national speaker, serves on multiple boards and committees, and partners with national organizations, corporations and the Wendy's system in order to influence attitudes and make children a national priority across all political, economic, cultural, and business entities.

Stuart C. Williams

Managing Director, Private Wealth Management, Deutsche Bank

Stuart is the Boston Office Director for Deutsche Bank Private Wealth Management. He has been with Deutsche Bank and predecessor firms in a number of roles, dating back to 1993. Prior to joining DB, he was an officer with State Street Corporation, following his first position out of college with IBM Corporation. He and his wife, Debbie, live in Lexington, MA. They have three children, the two youngest of whom are adopted from Korea and China.

Deanna Carlson Stacy

CCAI Executive Director

Deanna started her work with orphans at the age of twelve by making monthly service trips with her church to an orphanage in Mexico. She has worked with children in the U.S. foster care system and visited with orphans and street children in Asia, Mexico, South America, and Eastern Europe. She is the author of *The Welfare of My Neighbor: Living Out Christ's Love for the Poor* (Family Research Council, 1999) and *Intercountry Adoption: An Exploratory Study of Adoptive Parents* (unpublished thesis, 1995). Prior to CCAI, Deanna served at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as Associate Director of the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (FBCI) and the FBCI liaison to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). Deanna also served as a member of the FBCI working group at USAID to accomplish its goals for the President's Emergency Plan for HIV/AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), including work with Orphan and Vulnerable Children. Deanna, who holds a Masters of Social Work, recently served as a CASA volunteer in Alexandria, VA. She and her husband Anthony are parents to one-year-old Summer Elizabeth.



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2007 National Angels in Adoption™ Awardees

Alonzo Mourning, Jr.

Alonzo Mourning, Center for the Miami Heat, was born in Chesapeake, Virginia on February 8, 1970. At only 12 years old, Alonzo Mourning was already 6 feet tall. He soon discovered the game of basketball and although he started out very clumsy, he was determined to play the best he could. Alonzo spent every day on the basketball courts practicing. In the 11th grade, Sports Illustrated voted Alonzo the best 11th grade player in the United States.

Upon graduating from Georgetown University in 1992 with a degree in Sociology, Alonzo was drafted in the First round, second pick overall by the Charlotte Hornets in the NBA draft.

After completing a successful three years with the Hornets, a series of transactions led Alonzo to seven years with The Miami Heat and then 1 1/2 seasons with the New Jersey Nets. In the end, Alonzo headed back to Miami in 2005 as a free agent. Here he led his team to the NBA finals and the franchises first Championship in the 2005-2006 season. Alonzo is also a seven-time NBA All-Star and two-time Defensive Player of the Year (1999 & 2000) and was a top-ten candidate for the award for the 2005-2006 season. He is currently among the league's leaders in blocked shots, field goal percentage and rebounds per game. Impressing others with the vigor and tenacity that he has put into being a defensive weapon for his team and an offensive nightmare for his opponents, Alonzo was selected to join an elite group of NBA players who represented the United States in the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia.

After being diagnosed with Focal Glomerulosclerosis (FSGS), a degenerative kidney ailment, at the start of the 2000-2001 season, Alonzo personally led a campaign to raise a minimum of two million dollars in funds for research, education, and testing to fight FSGS. He returned to the court the same year to play in the final 13 games of the season. Off the court, Alonzo has dedicated himself to creating positive and lasting changes in the lives of children. He has focused his community involvement on becoming an outspoken advocate for youth initiatives and foster care programs that assist abused, abandoned and



neglected kids through his charitable organization, Alonzo Mourning Charities, Inc. Since 1997, AMC has raised more than \$6 million for various organizations that aid in the development of children who are vulnerable to at-risk situations. In addition to supporting other non-profits, Mourning has focused his attention to stimulating the development of youth centers.

Alonzo's charitable efforts have not gone unnoticed. In 2006 he was the fourth Heat member to receive the NBA Community Assist Award, awarded by the NBA to honor a player who reflects the league's passion to give back. In 2003 he received the National Urban League's Outstanding Community Service Award, and the Silver Medallion Community Service Award by the National Conference for Community and Justice. In 2002 he also received the NBA's J. Walter Kennedy Sportsmanship Award, which is given to coaches or players for exemplary community efforts.

Alonzo believes his passion for helping children is most directly related to his foster mother, Fanny Threet. He vividly remembers the guidance and direction that she gave him as a child. Alonzo was put in foster care at age 10 and lived with Ms. Threet until he was 18. He credits Ms. Threet with teaching him the importance of dedication, hard work and giving back. Ms. Threet and her husband gave birth to two children, have adopted 11 children, and have been foster parents to more than 200 children.

Ms. Threet, along with Alonzo's biological parents and countless others, have made a tremendous impact on his life and as a result he is committed to making a difference in the lives of others.

Out of the spotlight and at home, Alonzo and his wife Tracy enjoy spending time with their son, Trey and daughter, Myka, and are active in various charitable programs. Tracy has her own clothing line, Honey Child, a lifestyle clothing collection of separates that gives women the spiritual freedom to dress and reflect who they are and what they are feeling. They are also supporters of numerous organizations that work to improve the lives of countless individuals.

Patti LaBelle

Beautiful, simply does not describe the incomparable force known to the world as Patti LaBelle. As time continues to evolve, the soulful songbird's name has become synonymous with grace, style, elegance and class. Belting out classic rhythm and blues renditions, pop standards and spiritual sonnets have created the unique platform of versatility that Ms. Patti is known and revered for. As she continues into her fourth decade of performing, the Philadelphia maven has returned to her roots with her latest project, *The Gospel According to Patti LaBelle*. "I was born gospel, so it's not like I'm coming back or trying to impress people with this new gospel project. I've always done this. I've never done a whole album. That's the only thing that's missing," observes the songstress. "I've come full circle where you can say it's a complete project."

Always on her heart, coupled with ten years of mental preparation, timing has always been the key component amidst Patti's busy schedule to complete this life inspired album. In between touring, taping her TV One show *Living It Up With Patti LaBelle*, acting – having made a special guest appearance in the Bryan Barber directed, *OutKast* movie *Idlewild* and with her Home Shopping Network endeavor *Patti LaBelle Clothing*, it's no wonder that everything has been crafted according to a divine plan. "Because of Bud's (longtime Musical Director and friend, Budd Ellison) situation, and I always wanted him to be involved with my gospel project because he was involved in all of my CD's, I said I better start now because he's slowly going away. That was my real reason for starting it."

Sadly, Bud Ellison passed away from prostate cancer before the completion of the album. Patti has dedicated this album to his loving memory in addition to donating all the proceeds to a variety of cancer organizations. "We're praying it is going to be one of my bigger albums that I won't be paid for. In a way, my payback will be we sold so many records and this money went to cancer research."

Music industry veteran Jheryl Busby lent his time, talent and treasure overseeing the *The Gospel According to Patti LaBelle* via his *Umbrella Recordings*, and the guest appearances alone raise



an eyebrow, as the all-star line up boasts of a who's who across musical genres. "Many people do things like this and you never hear about it. I think it's the right thing to do because you have to help wherever you can when you're in the position to help. I'm in the position, I don't need the money, but they need it for research so we can find out why we lost our loved ones and so that we don't have to lose any more."

The first co-singles possess sure fire messages within the music. "Anything," co-written by Patti and longtime collaborator Sami McKinney, produced by Nisan Stewart features gospel duo Mary Mary, producer/lyricist Kanye West and his latest protégé Consequence. With its pulsating drum beat, its inspirational message of being able to accomplish anything as a child of the King resonates. "Where Love Begins" featuring Yolanda Adams is a groovy mid-tempo written by legendary songwriter Denise Rich and co-produced by Troy Taylor and Gordon Chambers. Guitar riffs and hand claps stir the encouraging words "deep from within, because that's where love begins."

Co-producers Taylor and Gordon also contributed "Walk Away" featuring the incomparable CeCe Winans. Soft piano chords give way to the melodic harmony as the two women share their thoughts about overcoming obstacles by simply walking away from the enemy toward positivity. Country superstar Wynonna Judd lends her vocal prowess to the Shavoni and Sami McKinney produced track "Everything," about God's all encompassing power and love.

Anointed gospel powerhouses Tye Tribbett and GA, J Moss and the Soul Seekers lend their talents to "Pray Today," "He Loves You," and "God Ain't Through," respectively. "Pray Today," co-written by Patti and Sami McKinney was written seven years prior to the album coming together and ironically was one of the first recorded songs, while "He Loves You" is one of Ms. Patti's favorites. "You Are My Friend" was written and recorded nearly 30 years ago by Patti and Budd Ellison, co-produced by Ellison and Sami McKinney. "It's Budd. He's all through this album. Singing it makes me cry because I feel him all over the place, but it's very, very therapeutic."

A 14+ city church tour will accompany the

release of *The Gospel According to Patti LaBelle*. Beginning at The Potter's House in Texas, home to Bishop TD Jakes, Patti was blessed to have gospel legend Shirley Caesar pray a special prayer, "for people to accept me as the new carrier of His word. God is working on me, He's working through me, and He's putting changes all over me – positive. I know I'm chosen. I know this is something I was meant to do. For 10 years now I've been trying to do this gospel album and I finally did it. And it feels so good singing these songs!"

For Ms. Patti, she simply desires for her fans not to judge her with this record and to be aware that this gift is from her heart and deep within her soul. "I want them to take away a beautiful message. I want them to take away a beautiful CD, which means take it home, buy it so that we can help with this cancer calling." That humility and honesty has been the true gospel according to Patti LaBelle. "Staying a person that people can say they encountered and she was very, very giving. She didn't get Hollywood on us. I never want to be thought of as a Hollywood person, you know the people who don't have time for the people who made them!"

The same motivation that had Patricia Louis Holt blossom from a choir member to lead vocalist for Patti LaBelle & The Bluebelles to a solo artist is the same energy that keeps her fire burning at six-two years young. "Each year I grow, and that's a blessing from God. I do what I can do. I do what I feel God has given me the energy to do, so I just go out there and I do it...It's not about making money because I don't need money, but I need to sing. With a voice or without, I've got to get on that stage." And the world is thankful that Ms. Patti's preaching sounds so good to our ears.

In addition to her amazing entertainment career, Ms. LaBelle's work as a humanitarian is legendary. She has been active championing adoption, foster care, Big Sisters and the United Negro College Fund. While Ms. LaBelle's celebrated career is respected world-wide, she has also endured and survived personal strife. Within a 10-year period, she lost her mother, three sisters and best friend to diabetes and cancer. LaBelle herself was diagnosed with diabetes in 1994 and became a spokesperson for the American Diabetes Association.

Ms. LaBelle is mom to five children: a biological son, an adopted son and daughter of her late sister Jackie, and later 2 neighborhood children. They all still live in Philadelphia.

Marcus Samuelsson

As a dual citizen of Sweden and the United States, Marcus Samuelsson has seen the world through his adoption story and his culinary pursuits. In 1973, three-year-old Marcus Samuelsson was orphaned when his mother fell victim to a tuberculosis epidemic that raged through his Ethiopian homeland. He and his sister found refuge at a Swedish field hospital in nearby Addis Ababa, where they were taken in by a nurse who arranged for their adoption by a young Swedish couple from Göteborg, Sweden. Samuelsson describes his childhood on the West Coast of Sweden as an idyllic time spent with family and close friends. At a young age, he also discovered his passion for cooking alongside his grandmother, who was a professional cook. For Samuelsson, the choice to pursue cooking was an easy one to make.

In his culinary pursuits, Marcus Samuelsson has received more accolades than most chefs receive in a lifetime: He was the youngest chef ever to receive a three-star restaurant review from *The New York Times* from Ruth Reichl in 1995. Samuelsson has received the great honor of "Best Chef: New York City" from the James Beard Foundation and the James Beard Foundation also honored him as best "Rising Star Chef." Samuelsson, chef and co-owner of Restaurant Aquavit, is proud of Aquavit's consecutive four-star ratings in *Forbes'* annual "All-Star Eateries" feature. He was individually recognized in *Crain's New York Business'* annual "40 Under 40" at age 29; and was celebrated as one of "The Great Chefs of America" by *The Culinary Institute of America*. Most recently, Samuelsson has been recognized by the World Economic Forum as one of the "Global Leaders for Tomorrow" (GLT). The award, given out annually since 1993, recognizes young innovators from all corners of the world in the arenas of business,



government, civil society, the arts and media. Both Samuelsson's talent in the kitchen as well as his successful business achievements continue to be recognized locally, nationally and globally.

Samuelsson's first Swedish cookbook, *En Smakresa: Middagstips Från Marcus Samuelsson*, which was released alongside his work with Sweden's major television network, TV4, which aired a series of global food-themed segments, Samuelsson co-created. *En Smakresa* was awarded "Cookbook of the Year" in Sweden in 2002; one of many accolades the book has received to date. Samuelsson's first American cookbook *Aquavit* and *The New Scandinavian Cuisine* was released by Houghton Mifflin in October 2003. He has also been published in *The New York Times' The Chefs of the Times* (2001); *Magic in the Kitchen* (2002),

and *Hot Chefs Hip Cuisine* (2002).

On the philanthropic front, Samuelsson furthers his commitment to children by acting as the official spokesperson for a partnership between Dawn Dishwashing Liquid Antibacterial Hand Soap and the U.S. Fund for UNICEF. As an ambassador for the cause, he provides support for tuberculosis initiatives in developing countries—an issue close to his heart, and the very disease that robbed him of his birth parents. Marcus also dedicates his time and talent to the Careers Through Culinary Arts Program (C-CAP), a non-profit organization that provides inner-city high school students with training, scholarships and jobs in the restaurant and food service industry. Samuelsson also serves on C-CAP's advisory board and as the restaurant chairperson for the annual spring benefit.

Program Participants

Barbara Harrison

Barbara Harrison co-anchors News4 Today and News4 Midday. She also reports the weekly segment "Wednesday's Child," which features children available for adoption.

Harrison joined News4 in 1981, covering child health issues and providing special features profiles. An interest in child health led to her central role in a major station community outreach campaign, "Beautiful Babies Right From the Start." She made a television journal of her own pregnancy to motivate women to seek early prenatal care. Her goal was to help decrease the extremely high infant mortality rate in Washington, D.C. The project received local and national awards, including a special commendation from the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Harrison began her career as a copy writer for *Vogue* magazine. She then worked as a writer and producer for WNET-TV in New York City. Harrison joined radio as a writer, disc jockey and talk show host before moving to television. She became an anchor for KDFW-TV in Dallas in 1979 and KGO-



TV in San Francisco in 1980.

The Washington Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences honored Harrison with the Ted Yates Award for outstanding community service. In addition, she has received several Emmy awards and other recognitions for her work, including an award from the International Film and TV Festival of New York for a half-hour special she reported and produced, "The Healing of Kuwait."

Harrison grew up in Prairie View, Texas, and earned a Master of Arts Degree from Columbia University.

Barry Clayton Black Ph.D.

On June 27, 2003, Rear Admiral Barry C. Black (Ret.) was elected the 62nd Chaplain of the United States Senate. He began working in the Senate on July 7, 2003. Prior to coming to Capitol Hill, Chaplain Black served in the U.S. Navy for over twenty-seven years, ending his distinguished career as the Chief of Navy Chaplains.

Chaplain Black is a native of Baltimore,



Maryland and an alumnus of Oakwood College, Andros University, North Carolina Central University, Easter Baptist Seminary, Salve Regina University, and United States International University. In addition to earning Master of Arts degrees in Divinity, Counseling, and Management, he has received a Doctorate degree in Ministry and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Psychology.

Chaplain Black has been selected for many outstanding achievements. Of particular note, he was chosen from 127 nominees for the 1995 NAACP Renowned Service Award for his contribution to equal opportunity and civil rights. He received the 2002 Benjamin Elijah Mays Distinguished Leadership Award from The Morehouse School of Religion. In 2004, the Old Dominion University chapter of the NAACP conferred on him the Image Award, "Reaffirming the Dream – Realizing the Vision" for military excellence.

Chaplain Black is married and has three sons.

Jim Brickman

Jim Brickman revolutionized the sound of Adult Contemporary music with his pop-style solo piano and the romantic popular song. Since the release of his debut album "No Words," in 1994, Jim Brickman has had more charted adult radio hits (24) than any other artist and his romantic style has defined him as a marquis among contemporary instrumental hit makers. Jim's remarkable career includes six Gold and Platinum selling albums, consistent chart toppers on a variety of Billboard charts, a Grammy nod in 2003, SESAC "Songwriter of the Year" award, a Canadian Country Music Award and a Dove Award presented by the Gospel Music Association.

A favorite during the holiday season, Brickman's albums include "The Gift" in 1997, Grammy-nominated "Peace" in 2003, and his 2006 Target-exclusive "Christmas Romance." "Homecoming", to be released September 25th, 2007 by SLG Records, is his most diverse holiday collection yet.

"Homecoming" celebrates the importance of the holidays and Brickman's music adds to the closeness of the season with original compositions, mixed with traditional holiday songs. The album



features guest performances by famed singer/songwriter Richie McDonald (of Lonestar), the late Gerald Levert, and singer Anne Cochran (both attended the same hometown high school as Jim) jazz guitarist Peter White and violinists Tracy Silverman and David Klinkenberg. Brickman will unwrap his latest melodic gifts, with featured guests from the album, with a robust holiday season tour, beginning Nov. 23 through the new year, with nearly three dozen dates confirmed.

Along with his career highlights, Jim's best-known compositions include the chart-toppers "Valentine," "The Gift," "Love of My Life," and "Peace." In November 2005, he held the top three spots on Billboard's New Age chart for his albums "The Disney Songbook," "Grace" and "Greatest Hits." Jim has established a reputation for his collaborations with many gifted musical artists that include: Martina McBride, Michael W. Smith, Kenny Loggins, Sara Evans, Gerald Levert, Herb Alpert, Collin Raye, Michael Bolton, Donny Osmond and Olivia Newton-John.

A strong supporter of PBS, Jim has produced three concert specials for the network, which include Jim Brickman at the Magic Kingdom The Disney Songbook (2005), *My Romance, An Evening With Jim Brickman* (2000) and *Love Songs and Lullabies* (2002).

Brickman's other successful endeavors, including a weekly, national syndicated radio show, *Your Weekend*, two best-selling books of essays, *Simple Things* and *Love Notes*, numerous TV appearances including ABC's *Gala for the President at Ford's Theatre*, NBC's *Today Show*, and hosted the A&E special *Winter Solstice on Ice*.

Other entrepreneurial ventures include Brickhouse Direct, an on-line marketing, website-design and fulfillment business, which creates websites and offers marketing tools to the entertainment industry, and boasts a client list that includes Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith, Carly Simon, Joe Nichols, Michael Feinstein and Universal Records.

Davin Gaschen

Davin Gaschen, a world wide renown vocalist and performer, is no stranger to the art of entertaining. David got his start at the early age of 15 and has not looked back. A graduate of the Texas Tech University School of Music, David received his degree in Vocal performance. After graduation, David moved to Chicago, Illinois to begin following his dream of being on Broadway. A veteran of over twenty shows, he landed leading roles of Frederic in the Pirates of Penzance and Karl Franz in The Student Prince with Light Opera Works in Chicago and then in May of 1995 David was given the chance of a lifetime. He was cast as the Phantom Alternate in the original Swiss Production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's The Phantom of the Opera. At the age of 26 David was the youngest Phantom to be cast in the Phantom of the Opera. After playing the Phantom for two years in Switzerland, David was asked to reprise his role of Phantom in the German Production of The Phantom of the Opera. While in Europe, David performed the role of The Phantom well over 1000 times. In the summer of 1999, David was asked to be in the cast of The Phantom of the Opera on Broadway. He made his Broadway debut as the Phantom in November of 1999. David has now performed the role of Phantom over 1300 times. Although this dynamic performer loves the Broadway stage, he has changed directions in his career to the concert arena. With his newly released self-titled CD, David Gaschen, he has charged on to the Pops scene as an up and coming star. David has performed with outstanding Symphonies such as Fairfax Symphony Orchestra, The Wheeling Symphony, and the Lubbock Symphony. In addition to his self-titled CD, David Gaschen, David has also recorded Let Me Sing and I'm Happy solo CD and is also on the CD Broadway's Fabulous Phantoms with the likes of Howard McGillin, Hugh Panaro and the original Phantom of the Opera, Michael Crawford. David has performed in a variety of benefit performances across the country. In addition to his benefits, David has also done the voice over work for numerous companies including United Supermarkets. David is very proud of his



Lubbock Texas heritage. In September of 2006, David was inducted into the Buddy Holly Walk of Fame in Lubbock for outstanding contributions to the field of music. He also received the distinguished Alumni Award from the School of Visual and Performing Arts at Texas Tech University. David's best productions to date have been his wonderful son, Andrew, and his incredible daughter, Molly Marie. David thanks God in Heaven for his beautiful wife Jeanne and his wonderful Father and seven brothers and sisters.

Agnes Barrios

Student at Brown University and CCAI Foster Youth Intern Alumna

Agnes is a junior at Brown University this year and is majoring in History and Theatre Arts. Since an early age, Agnes has been interested in the Theatre and participated in many school productions. However, she says, her "life was not as glamorous as the stage." After her father abandoned her, her mother and brother at the age of six, Agnes lived and survived most of her childhood in Los Angeles in immense poverty, abuse, and homelessness; not to count the number of shelters, motels, streets and the four years she spent living in a van when she was ten.

Agnes was placed in the foster care system at 14 and lived in five more places before her 18th birthday. One of these places, her last placement, was a family friend of one of her school mates, a woman by the name of Lola Levoy. Agnes continues to share her holidays with Lola and attributes her success to the stability and love of her foster mother.

This past summer, Agnes interned on Capitol Hill through CCAI's 2007 Foster Youth Internship Program in Representative James Langevin's office from her university's state of Rhode Island. Agnes worked on researching and promoting legislation to improve the foster care system, and even delivered a speech on the "Importance of Education in the Lives of Foster Youth" at a Capitol Hill briefing.

After 8 weeks on Capitol Hill, Agnes spent the remainder of her summer working at Liner Yankelevitz, a law firm in which she won a school



scholarship from in 2005. Agnes hopes to attend graduate school at Columbia University and pursue theatre while in New York City. Eventually, Agnes would like to return to Los Angeles and become an actress and filmmaker. One day, Agnes would also like to ameliorate the foster care system and run her own performing arts school/camp for foster youth.

Freddie Mac Foundation Heart Gallery

The Freddie Mac Foundation Heart Gallery features compelling portraits of children in foster care who are waiting to be adopted. The moving photos capture the spirit of these children – all of whom are hoping to find a loving, permanent family of their own. Their faces are just a few of the half million that form the picture of foster care in this country.

The children featured in the gallery are from Washington, D.C. and the surrounding areas. Since November 2005, the exhibit with photos of 48 children has traveled around the Capital area. To date, 22 children have been adopted. This is the first gallery of its kind in the D.C. area. There are more than 60 Heart Galleries nationwide. The Foundation thanks its host partners for their commitment to our community.

Previously, the Heart Gallery was displayed in Washington, D.C., at Union Station, the John A. Wilson Building (housing the D.C. Mayor's office and City Council) and the Kennedy Center; and in Virginia at the Fairfax County Government Center and at Freddie Mac.

Freddie Mac Foundation's Wednesday's Child



Freddie Mac Foundation's Wednesday's Child — an Emmy-nominated program with a proven track record of success — is a part of the Freddie Mac Foundation's national campaign to increase adoptions of foster children. Each Wednesday, a child in foster care who is available for adoption is profiled on the local evening news. During a segment hosted by a popular local newscaster, viewers are encouraged

to learn more about helping these children find homes, and a phone number is provided. The children who are featured are usually children for whom it is difficult to find families, since they are often older, in sibling groups, and may have health and developmental needs. For these children, this program is often their last chance to find a permanent home and a family. The Freddie Mac Foundation's Wednesday's Child program started in the Washington, DC metropolitan area in 1992, a partnership with NBC-4 and the Council of Governments. Its phenomenal success there encouraged the Freddie Mac Foundation to expand the program nationwide. Wednesday's Child is now shown in 5 cities: Washington DC, New York, Los Angeles, Atlanta and Philadelphia. The results have been outstanding. Since the program began, over 600 children have been placed in permanent, loving homes, giving them a chance for a brighter future. And over 20,000 viewer inquiries have been generated from people interested in becoming foster care and adoptive parents. For more information, visit the Freddie Mac Foundation website at:

www.freddiemacfoundation.org.

Never Alone

May the angels protect you
Trouble neglect you
And heaven accept you when its time to go home
May you always have plenty
Your glass never empty
And know in your belly
You're never alone

May your tears come from laughing
You find friends worth having
With every year passing
They mean more than gold
May you win but stay humble
Smile more than grumble
And know when you stumble
You're never alone

Chorus:

Never alone
Never alone

I'll be in every beat of your heart
When you face the unknown
Wherever you fly
This isn't goodbye
My love will follow you stay with you
Baby you're never alone

Well I have to be honest
As much as I wanted
I'm not gonna promise the cold winds won't blow
So when hard times have found you
And your fears surround you
Wrap my love around you
You're never alone

Chorus

May the angels protect you
Trouble neglect you
And heaven accept you when its time to go home
And when hard times have found you
And your fear surrounds you
Wrap my love around you
You're never alone

Chorus

My love will follow you stay with you
Baby you're never alone

Tonight's Menu

FIRST COURSE

Creamy Celery Root and Truffle Soup

ENTRÉE

Oven Roasted Beef Tenderloin and Tilapia
with Apple Jack Sweet Potatoes and Parsnip Fricassee
Purple Mustard Sauce

DESSERT

Vanilla Dome
with Light Vanilla Cream and Caramel Glaze
Garnished with Dark Chocolate
Strawberry Sauce

2007 Angels in Adoption™ Awardees

A L A B A M A

Bryant A. Whitmire, Jr.

Senator Jeff Sessions

For several years, Bryant A. (Drew) Whitmire, Jr., has been considered by many in Alabama as its premier adoption attorney. Those who work with him have praised him for going beyond the call of duty and opening his heart to the adoptive parents that he seeks to help. Drew is described as a man who "goes to work every day with a desire to help a child and a family find each other—and a determination that he will do whatever it takes to bring them together." Drew's dedication to this practice is admirable—not only is he a member of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys and several other organizations that benefit families, but he literally helped draft Alabama's adoption code. Drew Whitmire's dedication to adoptive parents and their children makes him an outstanding choice for Alabama's Angel of Adoption.

A L A S K A

Linda and Dave Huffaker

Senator Lisa Murkowski

My desire to help children began when I was young. At the age of six I brought home a girl from school that didn't have a mother and asked my mom if we could keep her. I first licensed as a foster parent in 1981. When I received my first placement, I was hooked. What was a dream became a passion. I have provided a home to fifty-one children since that time with ages ranging from birth to eighteen. I have provided therapeutic care for numerous severely, emotionally disturbed youth and for several teenage mothers and their infants. I speak on panels to encourage families investigating becoming a foster parent. I currently write home studies for foster-to-adopt homes. I must give great credit to my four biological children who have shared unselfishly in this lifestyle choice. In 2000, I met Dave Huffaker. I was intrigued by his positive outlook and his ability to see the good in difficult situations. We married in 2001 and he hauled my four biological children

and two long term foster children up the Al-Can where we became a family. He immediately became a wonderful loving father to all of the children and joined me as a foster parent that year. Together we have parented thirteen foster children. We are currently in the process of adopting the two children who came to Alaska with our family. We feel so fortunate to have had the joy and challenges that each and every one of these children has brought into our home. We are often asked why we do what we do. The answer is simple; it is what Jesus Christ would want us to do. We feel truly blessed and wouldn't give up one second with any of the beautiful children who have touched our lives.

A R I Z O N A

Adrian and Lizet Aranda

Representative Raul Grijalva

It is with great pleasure and respect that I nominate Lizet and Adrian Aranda for this year's Angels in Adoption Award. My nomination of the Aranda family focused on their commitment, enthusiasm and their tireless efforts to be advocates for adoptive and foster children. Lizet and Adrian Aranda became licensed in 2004, initially to provide care for their siblings, hoping that one day they would have the opportunity to adopt. After providing care for their siblings and the children reunifying with their biological mother, the Arandas opened their home to other children in need. Since then, they have adopted one child and are currently in the process of adopting a sibling group of two. They have opened up their home to care for three sibling groups, between the ages of birth to six years old. Lizet and Adrian make the children feel at home. They have worked great with all agencies involved in the cases, always looking at the best interest of the children under their care. The Arandas are phenomenal people, always giving of themselves and then giving more. They have committed to long term placement with sibling groups and they provide excellent care to those in their home by offering a loving, caring and structured environment where the children can grow and have positive life experiences.

Arizona Adoptions and Foster Care

Representative Harry Mitchell

Arizona Adoptions and Foster Care is an agency that was started by a group of foster and adoptive parents that became incorporated on November 11, 1976. The agency provides pre-service and advanced training as well as post placement services including monitoring, counseling, mentoring and advocacy for its 250 foster and adoptive families. Hundreds of adoptive families have been served since the agency was incorporated with 250 adoptions finalized in the past five years.

Beverly Quidort

Representative John Shadegg

I have tremendous admiration for those who choose to make a difference in the lives of children and with so many children in need of a safe and loving environment, I am honored to recognize Beverly Quidort for her dedication to the betterment of children and families through adoption. Her vital work and contributions in the field of adoption are truly outstanding. Beverly, a Phoenix resident with a Masters in social work, has dedicated her career and life to serving birth and adoptive parents in private adoptions. She works tirelessly to provide support and guidance to adoptive parents by sponsoring adoption workshops. These workshops are a valuable source of insight, compassion and resources for parents at a time when it is needed most. Her dedication has made a profound difference in the lives of many children and their families. I applaud her efforts and all she does for the improvement of the lives of the children she helps. Beverly truly exemplifies the spirit of this award. Her personal commitment to adoption and to the well-being of children is commendable, and I am honored to recognize her as an Angel in Adoption.

A R K A N S A S

Lisa Buckmiller

Representative Vic Snyder

Dr. Buckmiller serves as the Director of the Vascular Anomalies team. In addition, she is the Director of the Cleft Lip/Palate Team at Arkansas Children's Hospital. Dr. Buckmiller is actively

involved with several organizations concerning orphaned children from Kenya and China. She has been part of several missions to these countries and has made a significant difference in the lives of these children. In April of 2006, Dr. Buckmiller had the opportunity to perform surgery on a child from China with a large nasal hemangioma. She became very attached to this child while she was there. Dr. Buckmiller and her husband, Richard Hinkle, adopted this little girl in February 2007. Her name is Anna.

Dr. Harry Harmon

Representative John Boozman

Doctor Harry Harmon is an Arkansas physician who began his practice as the first pediatrician in Rogers when he established the Rogers Pediatric Clinic in 1974. I have known Dr. Harmon for more than 30 years and can attest that he has given generously of his time on behalf of children and children's issues. His commitment to adoptions has been as part of a team from which more than 700 children have been placed for adoption. Dr. Harmon has been instrumental in assisting with medical advice concerning health issues that arise during pregnancy, delivery and birth, both to the adoption specialist and to the adopting parents. Without his involvement and assistance, our local adoption efforts in Northwest Arkansas would not have enjoyed the success that has made so many adopting families healthy, happy and complete. On several occasions, it was Dr. Harmon's expertise that averted a crisis in a medically sensitive situation. In addition, the first neonatal intensive care nursery in Northwest Arkansas was established through his efforts. Dr. Harmon is a truly a public servant, having served eight years on the St. Mary's Hospital Board and 14 years on the Rogers School Board. He maintains a special interest in neurodevelopmental disabilities of low severity, better known as ADD, ADHD and Learning Disorders, and has assisted many families with these developmental difficulties. Dr. Harmon is a graduate of Hendrix College and the University of Arkansas School of Medicine. His pediatric training began at University Hospital and ended at Arkansas Children's Hospital. He served two years as guest of the U.S. Navy at the Patuxent River Naval facility during the Vietnam conflict. He is a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics, is

Board Certified and is a lifelong Methodist. Dr. Harmon is married and has two grown children and a new granddaughter. His wife, Jenny, is the executive director of the Ozark Natural Science Center. He is very proud to have two wonderful adopted nieces. I am proud to nominate my good friend, Dr. Harry Harmon, as the 2007 Angel of Adoption for the 3rd District of Arkansas.

Norine Pippin

Senator Blanche Lincoln

Our adoption nominee is Norine Pippin, adoption specialist in the Northwest Adoption Area. Mrs. Pippin has over 15 years Child Welfare experience, having worked 5 years with Louisiana DHS providing protective services and working food stamps and AFDC, as well. The past 10 years with Arkansas DHS, Mrs. Pippin has provided protective, foster care, investigative and adoption services. Although Mrs. Pippin loves all aspects of child welfare, adoption services is most dear to her heart. Mrs. Pippin accepted the Northwest Arkansas adoption specialist position two years ago and has received kudos from the area juvenile judge for decreasing the average length of stay from removal to finalization of children in her area to 16 months. Mrs. Pippin works endless hours providing services to the children in her area and assisting other specialists because of her knowledge and expertise. Mrs. Pippin holds degrees in Nursing, Psychology and Business.

CALIFORNIA

Hortencia and Cayetano Aguilera

Representative Bob Filner

I nominate Hortencia and Cayetano Aguilera as my "Angels in Adoption" for 2007. I appreciate the work of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute for providing this event which allows Members of Congress to highlight the people who are making a difference in the lives of children through adoption or foster care. The Aguilera home has been a licensed foster family home since 2004. They have accepted several children into their home, adopting three children, two siblings in 2005 and one whose adoption is about to be finalized. According to the social worker who has worked with them, "Hortencia and Cayetano Aguilera are very good foster and adoptive par-

ents. They provide the love, nurturing, and stability that children require. They treat all the children in their care as if they were their biological children." Hortencia also does volunteer work in the community. The Aguileras are two people who more than qualify as Angels in Adoption! Without fanfare or recognition, they quietly accept children who need love and a home, and they provide the care that is vital in order for children to become responsible, productive, and caring adults. In addition, they represent hundreds of other parents in my Congressional district. By honoring the Aguileras, we honor all the other parents who are doing the same for other children. Without them, sadly, many children would grow up without love and care.

Claudia Asprer

Representative Lynn Woolsey

It's my pleasure to nominate Claudia Asprer as the Angel in Adoption for California's Sixth District. Claudia has been an inspiration to more than 60 girls who were placed with her as foster children since she was 26 years old. The first girl Claudia fostered, Marjorie Delgadillo, was an abused child who lived in several homes before she was adopted. As testament to Claudia's extraordinary dedication as a foster parent, Marjorie is now applying to law school and hopes to help other victims of abuse. Recognized by the community for her work, Claudia currently works as a Medical Assistant for the Marin County Health and Human Services, where she won an Employee of the Month Award from the County for her excellence and dedication. She runs the highly praised pregnancy prevention program for the County, called "Baby Think it Over," and works with teens to help them make responsible decisions. She and her husband currently are foster parents to four teenage girls.

Mona Lisa Brown

Representative Adam Schiff

Mona Lisa Brown is a veteran Resource Parent who has been with Five Acres since 1995. She is a devoted and nurturing parent who has served at least 18 children during her years spent with Five Acres. Founded in 1888, Five Acres is a child and family services agency that offers an array of services including residential care and education, mental

health services in homes and schools, foster care and adoptions, and domestic violence prevention. She has adopted one son, Michael, who is now 5 years old. He came to Mona as an infant in foster care and was recently adopted. Mona has four other children in her home as well; one biological son along with three other foster/adopted children. With two of the children, she has pursued Legal Guardianship. Mona is the kind of person who exudes warmth. She is a source of stability, an example of courage and a pillar of strength for her family and community. Mona always wears a smile and has a positive attitude. She has crossed racial barriers in working with children and helped many to overcome developmental delays. Mona goes above and beyond her call of duty to see that every child under her care has a competing chance. She is active in the schools of her children and involves them in various spiritual, cultural, and social events within her community. Mona is often heard bragging to others about her children's latest accomplishments. Mona Lisa Brown is a local hero who is respected, admired and appreciated!

Sarah Davis

Representative Barbara Lee

The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute seeks to highlight "ordinary people doing extraordinary things." In honoring "unsung heroes" as National Angels, the Coalition recognizes people who make a significant impact on our communities through compassion and perseverance. A National Angel is aware of the tremendous importance of caring for the nation's youth, especially the least of those among us. The Angel from the 9th congressional district of California, Sarah Davis, embodies the Congressional Coalition on Adoption's motto in every sense. Sarah Davis is a shining example of an ordinary person who has dedicated her life to helping others. In her first experience working in a group home, Ms. Davis was astonished by the number of youth that had been removed from their families and placed into the system. Among the many children Ms. Davis aided was a family of seven siblings who had been placed in foster care. She was inspired by the family's struggles and decided to become a foster parent to two of the young boys. Thirteen years later, Ms. Davis remains a devoted foster parent having welcomed more than 70 youth into her West Oakland home. She

has provided each child with a positive environment full of educational and enriching programs which have given them the opportunity to become successful and capable young people. Ms. Davis is the true epitome of an angel of dedication and compassion. By opening her home and heart to dozens of youth throughout the years, she has made a momentous difference in the lives of youth in the greatest need making her truly extraordinary.

Ruth and Ron DeVries

Representative Gary Miller

Ruth and Ron DeVries are "Angels in Adoption". I had the privilege to meet them after reading a newspaper article that touted this wonderful couple. This article described the truly selfless actions they have shown to children. The DeVrieses, as foster, adopted, and birth parents, have taken in 236 children in 44 years. Our society is greatly enhanced through people like Ruth and Ron and they have earned my admiration. After having 4 children of their own, Ron and Ruth thought their parenting journey would come to an end. However, as Ruth watched her children grow, she felt called to do more. Her mother had opened her home and heart to foster children. Ruth felt compelled to do the same. The DeVrieses took in their first foster child on May 1, 1966 and never looked back. Ruth and Ron have adopted four of the many children who came through their door: Roxanne, now 30; Jennifer, now 20; Natalie, now 14; and Nikki, now 6. Through the years, they have taken in 228 foster children, many of whom were high risk medical, drug exposed, severely abused, emergency placement, and HIV positive. Even with their many responsibilities at home, Ron and Ruth have still found time to volunteer in the community. Ron coordinated and administered the Operation Santa Claus project that provides gifts for needy children and families. He also became president of the foster care association. Ruth has often been called upon to publicly speak on interracial placements, cultural awareness, fetal alcohol & drug exposed care and the grief & loss of parting with a child. This couple has fallen in love with everyone who has come through their door. When asked why they took such a heavy task upon themselves, they responded: "No one wanted to take them in, so we did." Ron said, "We

just fell in love with them!" They agree there is no greater joy or blessing than to adopt a child.

Eggleston Family Services

Representative Maxine Waters

Eggleston Family Services, an agency serving abused and neglected children, was created in 1994 as a division of Eggleston Youth Center, Inc., founded in 1974 to assist teenage males ages 12 to 18 who require out-of-home placement. Eggleston Family Services is a licensed, non-profit Foster Family Agency dedicated to finding nurturing and therapeutic foster homes for children including infants, siblings, teenage mothers and their babies and young people who are approaching adulthood and need intensive and supervised training for independent living. These children are the victims of child abuse and neglect and are under interim supervision of the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services. The foster family program works intensively with the child, the birth parent (or legal guardian) and the certified foster parent, encouraging a positive working team thus facilitating an early and successful return of the child to the birth parents, whenever possible. Eggleston Family Services' mission is to make a difference in the lives of children by providing quality, comprehensive services to children and their families, thus creating an opportunity for healing and family reunification.

Denise and Adam Ginsberg

Representative Michael Honda

It is with great pleasure that I nominate Adam and Denise Ginsberg for the 2007 Angels in Adoption program. Their compassion and their dedication to their community and family is inspirational. Adam and Denise have dedicated their time and efforts as volunteers in our community, focused on improving the lives of others. Adam, an engineer, has served as a board member of the Emergency Housing Consortium LifeBuilders, a non-profit that provides supportive services for housing needs. Denise, a CPA, has served as the Finance Director for the Humane Society of Silicon Valley, a non-profit that shelters and seeks homes for pets, and for the Jewish Vocational Service, an organization that works with émigrés looking for training and job placement. She has also served on the board of several non-profits. After 20 years of

work, Adam and Denise decided to adopt a child in their mid-forties. They took great care looking at different paths to adoption, finally deciding to approach both the private and public sectors. Two years passed before they were invited to an annual event held by the Santa Clara Department of Social Services through which foster children who are awaiting a permanent home can meet adoptive parents. It is at this event that Denise met Christina, the second to youngest of four sisters. Christina had been working on a picture with the craft materials, when she turned and handed Denise a gold star. Denise was deeply touched by the gesture, and soon found out that Christina had three sisters. Adam and Denise soon met all four sisters: Ilene, 6, Laura, 5, Christina, 3, and Emily, 1. They were captivated by the girls' enthusiasm and the kindness that they showed to one another. While the couple was initially looking to adopt one child, Adam and Denise were determined to keep all four sisters together as part of the Ginsberg family. Two months later in June 2005, the sisters arrived at the Ginsbergs' home in time for Denise's 44th birthday. The adoption was finalized on Denise's sister's birthday the following year on June 5th, 2006. Although they never anticipated having such a large family, all obstacles – both physical and legal – were eventually removed. The sisters adapted easily to their new environment. The Ginsbergs nurtured their daughters' outgoing personalities, encouraging them to make friends in their new community and neighborhood, and kept in touch with two of their previous foster homes. Their daughters excel in school, enjoy summer camp, and embrace their new Jewish culture. Adam and Denise encourage volunteerism with their daughters, often participating in community events in Campbell and the greater Bay Area. The girls are excited about volunteering together at a shelter this Thanksgiving. They realize that they were once a part of the shelter system, and can now give back. Denise plans on continuing to volunteer her time in the foster community, particularly to promote adoption of sibling groups. She sees the advantages that children can have when they are still able to maintain close ties to their birth siblings. The bond between the girls has kept them strong and optimistic. Despite all the physical, psychological and emotional challenges that the four girls have faced, they are happy, healthy and loved.

Once again, I am honored to nominate Adam and Denise Ginsberg for the Angels in Adoption program. Their dedication to their community and their family serves as a fine example for us all.

Jerry and Connie Hazeltine

Senator Dianne Feinstein

Jerry and Connie Hazeltine became foster parents in 2003 to Yvette, a bright-eyed three-year-old girl who quickly bonded with Connie Hazeltine. Both Connie and Jerry were very mindful of the cultural differences that existed in their family. Since Mrs. Hazeltine was an immigrant from Germany, she understood the transition to a new culture and ensured that Yvette maintained a connection with her Hispanic heritage. The Hazeltines made sure that Yvette had regular contact with her birth mother. Mrs. Hazeltine took the initiative to be a mentor to Yvette's birth mom and maintained regular contact with her. When it became apparent that Yvette could not be returned to her biological mother's care, the Hazeltines decided to adopt her. But shortly after the adoption process began, Connie Hazeltine was diagnosed with breast cancer and died after six months of aggressive treatment. Jerry Hazeltine now had sole care of a young child. It was very difficult for him to tell Yvette about Mrs. Hazeltine's death but when he told her, Yvette responded that Connie had told her that she is the "first star that she sees at night." After many conversations with Yvette, he decided to go ahead with the adoption process. Mr. Hazeltine and Yvette have grown closer and have adapted well despite the loss of Mrs. Hazeltine. Jerry Hazeltine continues to make sure that Yvette maintains consistent contact with her birth family and he honors her cultural background by attending local events and strengthening her cultural identity.

Lola Levoy

Representative Henry Waxman

Congressman Henry A. Waxman is delighted and honored to nominate Ms. Lola Levoy as his 2007 Angel in Adoption. Congressman Waxman is particularly pleased to select Lola because she was nominated by her former foster daughter, Agnes Barrios. Lola has been an active and passionate advocate for foster youth for many years. In addition to working full-time as the CEO of Beverly

Hills Escrow, she is the President of Children Uniting Nations, an organization created to bring attention to the plight of at-risk and foster youth. Each year the group sponsors a "Day of the Child," an all day event for foster youth that pairs them with mentors. Lola is instrumental in matching mentors and mentees each year. Lola is also a valued Board Member with Aviva Family Services. She is active with the United Care Foster Agency as well. Lola is known by all of these agencies for her generosity and heart of gold. In addition to all her work with organizations, each year she organizes and runs her own Christmas Toy Drive. She collects more than 8,000 gifts annually for Foster Youth in Los Angeles and provides hundreds of the gifts herself. Lola has made a difference in countless lives of foster youth through her involvement with these programs. But perhaps her most remarkable achievement is the commitment and love she has shown to her own foster youth. Lola took Agnes into her home just as Agnes was being emancipated from the foster care system in Los Angeles. Agnes told my office, "If it weren't for Lola, I would be not only parentless, but homeless. Lola informally adopted me and gave me all the support I needed (including giving me tutors for my SAT's and dropping me off at Brown University and buying all my dorm stuff-she is my best friend, seriously!" I am delighted to echo Agnes' gratitude in nominating Lola Levoy as the 2007 Angel in Adoption for the 30th District of California.

Robert McAleese and Karen Sexton

Representative Doris Matsui

Approximately one year after they were married and working on their doctorates in Marital and Family Therapy, Robert and Karen McAleese decided to build their family through adoption. Starting in 1985 and continuing through 2003, Robert and Karen adopted ten children who now range in age from six to twenty-two years old. After their first seven private newborn adoptions, these committed parents turned to Sierra Adoption Services. They welcomed their last three children through special needs foster care adoptions creating a family of mixed ethnicities, as well as several children challenged either physically or mentally with severe Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, retardation/autism, Fetal Alcohol

Syndrome, or Cystic Fibrosis. Raising ten children has not been an easy task; nevertheless, Robert and Karen feel blessed to have had the opportunity. Their unrelenting sense of patience, perspective, understanding and humor has allowed them to raise ten beautiful children. Sacrifices have been made by both; yet they both feel they have been given back much more in return. Each contributes to supporting their family by holding rewarding jobs. Robert continues to help children outside of his home as a college counselor at Jesuit High School in Sacramento while Karen has selflessly put off her professional career these past 22 years in order to completely focus and devote her time to her family as a full-time mom. When asked why they continued to adopt children, Robert and Karen stated that adoption has been a rich experience for them - one that has added a sense of purpose and relevance to an already fulfilling family life. They feel each of their children have been enriched not only by their love and support but from that of their siblings. Today, as they sit around the table together at dinnertime, Robert and Karen are continually reminded that parenting their children has been the most rewarding experience of their lives and feel grateful for the opportunity to offer each of their children a stable loving family.

Jack Miranda

Representative Linda Sanchez

It is my honor to nominate Pastor Jack Miranda. He is truly an Angel in Adoption. Pastor Miranda is the Founding Pastor of the Living Faith Church in La Mirada, and he is a passionate advocate for getting involved with the foster youth of Los Angeles County. He and his wife, Eileen, have adopted two children from the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, and he has started an adoption ministry at the church. Through the adoption ministry outreach, his congregation has become a community spokesperson for the joys and rewards of adoption. In addition, he has graciously offered his church for the Heart Gallery, a portrait exhibit featuring older adoptable children, as well as connections to his community for potential adoptive resources. He also encourages his congregation to get involved by adopting the many available special needs children in Los Angeles County. Pastor Miranda has been a faith-based partner with the

Department of Children and Family Services for several years now. He has spoken at several of our Faith-based events and is willing to do whatever it takes to find a permanent and loving adoptive home for our many waiting children.

Deborah N. Silverstein, MSW, LCSW

Representative Dana Rohrabacher

I want to honor this extraordinary professional in adoption and children's mental health care. Deborah Silverstein's respected work in Orange County includes 30 years as an advocate and therapist with specialization in both supporting children whose lives were affected by trauma and loss and helping foster and adoptive parents to achieve success in their parenting journey. In the early 90's, Deborah joined Kinship Center® in creating adoption and developmental and mental health programs that served more than 3,000 foster and adopted children. Recognized nationally as a respected adoption and mental expert, Deborah has been published in professional journals and developed numerous educational curricula and training videos for parents and adoption professionals. The Adoption Clinical Training that she co-authored has been used to train more than 5,000 permanency professionals, primarily in California. Further, an adoptive parent education program that Deborah also created has been replicated in two other California counties. Deborah's vision inspires others to excel in their work with children and families. As a result, Kinship Center has achieved consistently positive outcomes for children and youth leaving the child welfare system and for the families who receive them. She is a valued member of Kinship Center's Executive Management Team as a Vice President and the driving force behind the development and sustainability of critical social services in Southern California. Along with her husband of 40 years, Deborah is an adoptive parent of four special needs youth.

June Simas

Representative Dennis Cardoza

June has been a foster mother for the past 37 years. She has adopted eight children, most with significant needs, such as deafness, cerebral palsy and respiratory problems. Some of her children were adopted from India and the rest through the County Foster Care System. June traveled to India

two times to escort four babies to the U.S. for their adoptive families. June also has four biological children. June retired from the City of Modesto in 1993, after working there for 13 years as an Office Supervisor for Parks and Recreations. After retirement, June worked for the City of Modesto on a part-time basis and volunteered at the County and Family Connections Christian Adoptions. She was a Board Member at the latter and an inspiration to many. June has also been a great mentor and supporter of other families who have either adopted or are considering adoption. She has been on numerous panels, been a "Buddy" and faithfully attends adoption-related support group functions with many of her children.

Gail Steele

Representative Pete Stark

Gail Steele is a true leader in my community on foster care and adoption issues. Anyone who has met Gail knows about her unending commitment to improving the lives of children. As a Alameda County Supervisor since 1992, Gail has been a champion of the right of all children to live in safe, nurturing, and stable homes. Ms. Steele was instrumental in creating a Children's Memorial Day in Alameda County, which is a day of remembrance of all children who have been the victims of violence and abuse. Gail has led the "Our Kids" collaborative project to assist at-risk youth in Hayward and Oakland. In addition, Gail has been recognized by the Child Welfare League of America and Lincoln's Children Center for her advocacy.

Dennis Volk

Representative Sam Farr

Dennis Volk has devoted the past 20 years to fostering children and helping foster and adoptive parents achieve success in their own parenting journey. As a single father, Dennis has been an amazing foster parent to 51 children since 1987. He is the adoptive parent of two children, one of whom is profoundly deaf, and he is in the process of adopting the five special needs foster children who are currently in his family. Dennis Volk has also been an active mentor parent to other foster and adoptive parents, and has provided support and coaching to them so that they can better parent the children in their care. He has become an inte-

gral part of the Kinship Center training team, an organization dedicated to adoption and foster services, in order to help other families understand adoption issues. One of Dennis' unique qualities is his ability to be inclusive of everyone who is important in the life of every child he has parented. He has reached out to the birth parents and relatives of all the children he has parented, and supported them in their efforts towards reunification. Dennis says that his greatest rewards comes from seeing the children he has parented begin to learn independent living skills, watching them make positive changes, and knowing that they have hope for a positive future. Dennis' contributions to the well-being of so many children as well as adoptive and foster families in the Monterey County are beyond compare.

Tami Wessen

Representative Ken Calvert

When I contacted Tami Wessen to let her know that we would be nominating her as our Angel, she suggested that we look for someone else. "I just feel there are many people out there who have done more for adoption than I have." This attitude is exactly why Tami is the perfect person for the honor. Working at a pro-life pregnancy counseling center in Riverside, California, Tami advises pregnant women who are considering abortions about adoption. "Yes, there is still loss, but there is life for the baby. I try to show them the love of adoption and that adoption is putting the baby first. Adoption is completely selfless." Speaking from her personal experience, Tami is able to share the story of her own family. In 1997 Tami and her husband were blessed with adopting a 2-year-old son. Tami's husband had also been adopted. "Our lives became complete when our son joined our family." Tami had always dreamed of being a mom, but when she and her husband realized they had an infertility problem, they knew that being parents meant so much more than having a biological child. "The second time we saw him he ran to us, calling us Mommy and Daddy. He knew that we were his parents, and he had been waiting for us...just as we had been waiting for him." Thank you - Tami, for your commitment to life, and your daily contributions to the community.

COLORADO

Karen Hiraki

Representative Marilyn Musgrave

Karen works at placing children with special needs all over the great state of CO. She placed my adopted daughter with us, and it has been a blessing. She has a special gift, and cares a great deal about the process! We love her, and we are so thankful that we had her with us on our own journey of adoption. I'm sure hundreds of other families feel exactly the same! Karen graduated from Colorado State University in 1981 and worked a year at a residential child care facility. She began working with Children and Family Services for the Department of Social Services in January of 1983. This year she will have completed 25 years with Social Services in two different counties in Colorado. Karen had worked for many years investigating child neglect allegations. During those early years, after she completed the investigation the case would go to another caseworker to address the family's dysfunction that resulted in the removal of the children out of the home. Karen never knew whether the parents were able to overcome their challenges in order to regain custody of their children. When she transferred to the adoption unit, unfortunately, she was getting back some of the same cases she investigated due to the parents inability to make changes in order to ensure their child's safety. There is a great responsibility in matching children with adoptive parents. Now that Karen supervises the adoption unit, she tries to stress the importance of compatibility and assessing the adoptive parents' ability to meet the child's special and cultural needs. After finalizing over 100 adoptions all around Colorado and in other states, Karen is in awe of the adoptive parents' unconditional love, patience and commitment to our children. The adoptive parents are truly the individuals who are most deserving of recognition.

Shannon Richter

Representative John Salazar

Shannon is the original founder and Executive Director of JOURNEYS, Inc., Child Placement Services which was initiated in February 2004. The mission of JOURNEYS, Inc. is to support and enhance foster children's self-respect, social skills

and independence by providing safe, healthy and educational living environments and families for all children in foster care. JOURNEYS, Inc. was established to provide the highest level of safe, quality foster care homes for youth displaced from their original living environments due to neglect, child abuse, delinquency and abandonment. JOURNEYS, Inc. also offers educational presentations, a unique foster youth peer support program and website: "Kommon Ground", and outreach services for various community members and professionals. Shannon Richter received a Bachelor of Science degree in clinical psychology in 1994 from the Colorado State University at Pueblo (formerly USC). In 1998, Shannon earned a Masters degree in criminal justice from the University of Colorado at Denver. Shannon has worked over 16 years with child abuse, sexual assault and various other crime victims. In 1994, she created the Pueblo Rape Crisis program. In 1997, she brought the SANE/SART (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner/Sexual Assault Response Team) Program to Pueblo County in order to assist sexual assault and child abuse victims with comfort, compassion and quality evidence collection techniques. The SANE/SART program is currently implemented in both Pueblo Hospitals as well as the Pueblo Child Advocacy Center. Shannon serves on the governing board of directors at Spanish Peaks Mental Health Center in Pueblo. She is also a member of the Pueblo Optimist Club and Mental Health Association of Pueblo (MHAP). In addition, she volunteers with AVCRT (Arkansas Valley Crisis Response Team) debriefing first responders such as law enforcement officers, fire fighters and emergency medical personnel. I would like to honor Shannon Richter for the Angels in Adoption Award. She deserves to be recognized for all of her ongoing efforts and advocacy to keep our children safe!

CONNECTICUT

Barbara Paris

Senator Joseph Lieberman

Barbara Paris, LPC, is the Vice President of Jewish Family Service in Bridgeport, Connecticut and the Director of Adoption Services. She has just celebrated her 20th year with the agency and over this time has helped over 400 families make their adoption dreams a reality. Whether they are

adopting domestically or internationally, Barbara is there to ensure the process goes as smoothly as possible and that the adoption meets the highest standards as required by the State of Connecticut and is in the best interests of the child. She is well respected by her colleagues throughout the State and goes above and beyond her 9 to 5 job. She has attended baby naming ceremonies, Baptisms, and bris's and birthday parties, all a testimony to how adoptive families keep in touch years after the adoption and many of the children refer to her as "Aunt Barbara". Everything Barbara does is with a smile and a positive attitude. She is compassionate and caring, but also detail-oriented, professional, ethical and compulsive about getting work done on a timely basis. She understands the long road that people have traveled on their adoption journeys and this comes through in all of her dealings with her clients. Barbara is also a woman of faith, very much believing that there is some greater plan at work for each of us. Her adoption work has touched her in so many ways that in addition to her more than full-time job, Barbara has now entered a seminary and hopes to become a Rabbi. Barbara was recently recognized by Jewish Family Service for her 20 years of service. One client in the Ad journal said the following which sums it all up: "Barbara, Thank you for helping us adopt our daughter. Your compassion, wisdom, knowledge and positive energy are the reasons we and everyone you touch prosper and celebrate this day!"

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Judge Kaye Christian

Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton

Judge Kaye Christian of the D.C. Superior Court has been an advocate on behalf of children in need of homes for the past 20+ years. Judge Christian was a graduate of Dunbar H.S. and received her undergraduate and law degrees from Georgetown. Back in the mid-1980's she was a supervisor in the Office of Corporation Council for the District of Columbia. Although she headed the Intrafamily Unit, her personal area of expertise was adoptions. Judge Kaye Christian would always advocate on the best interests of children. It was her performance in this role that brought her prominence and led her to becoming first, a

Magistrate, and then a Judge in the D.C. Superior Court. In January 2007 she was assigned to the Adoption Calendar allowing her to return to the area of the law she loves. In that role, the attorneys who appear before her are impressed with her compassion for the children.

FLORIDA

Howard Burris

Representative Jeff Miller

A healthy home which offers a safe, secure, and nurturing environment is essential to the well-being of all children. Every day, across the country, children are robbed of these fundamentals when the very people they rely on for protection and comfort subject them to abuse and neglect. Due to their maltreatment, children often enter the foster care system with medical, behavioral, and emotional problems. It is our responsibility as a society to break the cycle of abuse to ensure that these children are given back the childhood which is so wrongfully stripped from their lives. Today, I am proud and honored to recognize an Angel in Adoption from the First Congressional District of Florida. Howard H. Burris, a humble philanthropist and successful businessman, who donated land and more than \$1 million towards the construction and operation of the Santa Rosa Kid's House, an advocacy center for child abuse victims. He made the donation in loving memory of his late wife, Mary. The Mary E. Burris Center for Child Advocacy and Child Abuse Prevention will allow numerous agencies to collaborate under one roof to lessen the trauma and encourage the prevention of abuse for children and their families. Mr. Burris is truly an angel. With his generous contributions, Santa Rosa County can work to treat and prevent all forms of child abuse by creating changes in individuals, families, and society that strengthen and encourage personal growth and promote a positive, healing atmosphere where children are valued and loved.

Mary Clare Ciullo

Representative John Mica

In her years of community service, Sr. Mary Clare Ciullo, a member of the Sisters of the Presentation, has shown a true dedication to the

adoptive process. After receiving her Masters in Social Work in 1967, Sr. Mary Clare was recruited by Archbishop Joseph Ryan to go to Anchorage, Alaska and establish a Catholic Charities social services program specializing in adoptions. Her 20 years in Alaska took her all over the State—even starting the first licensed adoption agency in Alaska. During this time, Sr. Mary Clare placed over 500 children with loving families and even sat on the Governor's Advisory Council for Adoption. Sr. Mary Clare displayed a deep respect and wisdom for all parts of the adoptive process. She understood the caring and difficulty associate with the birth mothers' most loving decision to give their own children up for adoption. She also understood the needs of the children being placed and the characteristics of devoted adoptive families. Sr. Mary Clare loved her job and deeply cared for all the lives that she touched. By 1987, Sr. Mary Clare passed the torch to others in her order and returned to St. Colman's House in Watervliet, New York. She continues to this day working with troubled teenagers and senior citizens.

Jennifer and Jim Cunningham

Representative Tom Feeney

I am writing to honor Jim and Jennifer Cunningham, an exceptional couple currently living in Springfield, Virginia. Jim and Jennifer both serve our country in the military. However, Jennifer's legal residence is Port Orange, Florida. "It is better to love and have lost, then never have loved before." This is true in the lives of the Cunninghams. Both adopted as children, this common bond ignited the desire for the couple and their two biological children to add to their family through adoption from China. Although the process of adopting presented financial hurdles and sacrifices in order to bring their new addition home, the Cunningham's did what it took to meet the requirements in order to adopt internationally. A dream came true in October 2004 when, three months following submitting their dossier, a little boy with a heart defect was referred to the Cunningham family. The pictures of this little boy they were to name Nathaniel reflected a vibrant, happy child. Unfortunately, staggering news soon followed when Nathaniel passed away just five days later. They would never meet the son they carried in their hearts. Most people would shy away from the adoption arena

following such a tragedy. The Cunningham's did not. Remembering the financial strain the adoption process had placed on their own family, they turned their energies and hearts toward helping others adopt. Just two weeks after the news of Nathaniel's passing, they established a grant-making organization for others named the "Sea of Faces Foundation." As of June 2007, Sea of Faces, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, has awarded adoption grants to 10 families totaling \$15,000. The fundraising efforts have been spearheaded by Jim and Jennifer, particularly through the sales of jewelry Jennifer designs and hand-crafts herself. She serves as the Executive Director of the foundation, receiving as her reward the gratitude of adopting families, foregoing any salaried compensation. In light of the foundation's grass roots initiative, plus the dedication and devotion of both Jim and Jennifer to adopting families and children, I wholeheartedly recommend the Sea of Faces Foundation for the Angel's in Adoption Award. This organization is a direct result of an unselfish family's willingness to turn the loss of a child into a blessing for other children and their families.

Cathy Denton

Representative Adam Putnam

Cathy Denton of Valrico, Florida is the mother of five children – two biological and three adopted, grandmother of five and foster mother to 155 children and counting. When she and her husband Jerry began taking in foster children it was because of Cathy's deep love for infants. Her own children were ages seven and ten at the time and after experiencing a devastating still birth, she knew that there would be no more biological children. Their lives changed when Cathy and Jerry became foster parents for Catholic Charities and adopted two children that were exposed to cocaine in-vitro. Since those early days, the Denton home has become a shelter for infants and toddlers who are under the jurisdiction of the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF). Many of the children come to her with nothing more than the clothes on their backs. Cathy ensures that they are clothed, fed and receive the healthcare and developmental services many of them desperately need. More importantly Cathy ensures that each child is loved. She is completely committed to treating each child as her own and fighting for each child as an advo-

cate for their best interest. Even after Jerry Denton retired from his job with the federal government, the Dentons continue to provide a temporary home for abused, neglected and needy children. At a time in their lives when stress and worry should take a backseat to pleasure, the Dentons continue using their home and resources. At present, they have five foster children ranging in age from thirteen months to three years. Between caring for their twelve-year-old adopted daughter, attending DCF court hearings and changing hundreds of diapers, the Dentons have little time for respite. However, when they have an opportunity for rest and relaxation, they load the children in their motor home equipped with seatbelts to secure each car seat. Cathy said she wouldn't dream of leaving "her children" with a respite care worker. It would break her heart if she had to tell any of them that they couldn't accompany the family on vacation. Cathy lovingly maintains that each child in the Denton home is a part of the family - 155 and counting!

Helen Ervin

Representative Allen Boyd

Helen Ervin loves to say, "we don't find children for families, we find great families for children!" That subtle but important distinction reflects Helen's integrity and dedication to children. Helen's journey with Children's Home Society of Florida began in 1968. She has been a pillar in the adoption field for 39 years, and still serves children and families with a sincere heart. In October of 2005, Helen accompanied 13 families to China where they met and completed the adoption of their precious additions to their homes. To date Helen's "family" includes more than 400 children who have been carefully placed in loving homes. It is with great pleasure that I nominate Helen Ervin; a great and compassionate woman who is truly worthy of this distinction.

Leonard and Candie Haberman

Representative Ander Crenshaw

Lenny and Candie have opened their hearts and home to numerous foster children. In 16 years they have welcomed more than 85 children into their lives. Many of these children faced the dual challenge of being a foster child and having medical needs. In fact, they have cared for some of the

most medically involved by specializing in children and teens living with HIV. Thanks to the Habermans' kind hearts, so many children were given the love and attention they deserved. Lenny and Candie have three adult biological children and two adopted children ages 12 and 9. They have even spread the love of adoption onto their biological children who have adopted children of their own.

Hillsborough Kids, Inc.

Senator Mel Martinez

Hillsborough Kids, Inc. (HKI) is a private, non-profit organization that was created to oversee the child welfare system for Hillsborough County, Florida. Founded in 2001, HKI's mission is to ensure the safety and permanency of abused and neglected children in Hillsborough County by providing comprehensive services that promote strong families. Currently, HKI assists over 4,000 abused and neglected children. As the lead agency in Hillsborough County's Community-Based Care project, HKI works with a skilled network of local agencies that provide services to these children and their families. The services range from mental health care to foster and adoption services to case management and crisis intervention. Agencies such as Camelot Community Care, Children's Home Society, the Children's Board, and the Junior League aid in finding forever homes for these children. HKI has raised the adoption placement rate in the Tampa Bay area by more than 10% in the last two years. This past year, HKI led the state with 377 adoptions.

Dan and Luanne Hurst

Representative Ginny Brown-Waite

Dan and Luanne Hurst were PhD college professors when they decided to adopt their first child, Matthew. When Matthew's birth mother became pregnant again, she contacted the Hursts' attorney about their interest in adopting another boy so that the brothers could grow up in the same home. The Hursts then welcomed a son, Jesse, into their lives as well. The Hursts' background in English education helped them as parents when it was discovered that Matthew suffers from dyslexia. Today Luanne home schools both children while working part-time teaching college classes.

Scott Ryan

Senator Bill Nelson

I am pleased to recommend Dr. Ryan for recognition by Angels in Adoption. Dr. Scott Ryan has devoted his entire career to enriching the lives of foster children, orphans, and their adoptive parents. Scott has worked as a foster care counselor, social worker, child advocate, and now serves as Associate Dean and Associate Professor of Florida State University's College of Social Work. Dr. Ryan has been supported in his research by such highly acclaimed organizations as the Dave Thomas Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and the Florida Department of Children and Families. His research has focused on a multitude of adoption issues including: transcultural adoptions, special needs adoption, and the impact of play therapy within adoptive families. Scott is the recipient of numerous awards including the North American Council on Adoptable Children's 2007 Friend of Children and has twice been named a "Rising Star in Research" by the FSU Office of Sponsored Research. He has also published numerous scholarly articles on adoption and is the Editor of the prestigious journal, *Adoption Quarterly*. Dr. Scott Ryan's many contributions to the field of adoption make him an outstanding candidate for recognition by the Angels in Adoption award.

Matthew Taylor

Representative Cliff Stearns

Matthew Taylor is an Angel in Adoption. He has been a dedicated adoption coordinator for Jewish Family and Community Services (JFCS) for the last two years. For the five years prior to that he was a foster care caseworker for JFCS. He began his work in adoptions working as an investigative caseworker for the Florida Department of Children and Families. Matthew has gone above and beyond to find children forever homes. He will work long hours during the week and on weekends to meet the needs of these children and their prospective adoptive families. Matthew has done many recruitment efforts to find children homes, taking many to get pictures taken for the local "Heart Gallery" and taking them to the News station for television spotlight interviews. He is courageous and persistent in his search to find homes for foster teens and children. Over the last two years JFCS has finalized 196 adoptions that

Matthew has been an integral part of facilitating. Although already an angel in adoption, his dedication to helping children find permanent, loving families is why we nominate him to be officially recognized as such.

G E O R G I A

Suzette and Charles Brown

Representative John Lewis

Charles and Suzette Brown have adopted seven children and have one daughter who was in long term foster care. They have dedicated their lives to the youth of the Atlanta Metro Area. Their heart is so big, that when Suzette's close friend who adopted six girls had a major stroke two years ago and could no longer parent her girls, she and Charles came together with family and friends to have the children placed so they would not have to reenter into foster care. They took two of the girls in their home. At this time they have two children at home, Felicia, 13, and Xavier, 12, as well as Suzette's friend's daughters who are 14 and 12. Suzette has been employed with Roots Adoption Agency, an African-American adoption agency in Atlanta, Georgia for the past six years. She is a parent trainer. She has a dream of having a support group for kinship, foster and adoptive parents. Support groups are great preventions for disruptions and can help parents to maintain the longevity of children in care, states Suzette. She believes once a person adopts, there should be no disruption of a child and they should not reenter foster care. She would rather assist the families by supporting them and helping them through the tough times of parenting rather than a child have another loss of a family. In addition to working with local state and community leaders to mentor and guide individuals through the child welfare system, Charles and Suzette place children above all others. When state or local funding falls short of their children's needs, they find a way to care for their children. They want to work in partnership with the local, state, and federal government to help better support the needs of our children in the child welfare system; they are our future.

Irene Steffas

Senator Johnny Isakson and

Representative Tom Price

Irene Steffas has a remarkable and long-standing commitment to international adoption and immigration issues affecting children. She has devoted her knowledge to building and reuniting families for over twenty years. Her expertise in adoption and immigration law has made her a renowned servant to the adoption community throughout the United States. Ms. Steffas is committed particularly to children who are victims of abuse and neglect in the adoption system. She also volunteers her time to teach seminars throughout the United States and throughout the world as a goodwill ambassador to the United States Department of State's Bureau of International Information Program. Those who know her all agree that Ms. Steffas has a passion for helping children to find their home in loving families.

Lori Surmay

Representative Hank Johnson

Attorney Lori Surmay is a principal in Claiborne, Outman & Surmay, P.C., an adoption and reproductive technology law firm in Atlanta. For over nine years Lori has represented clients in all aspects of this family-building practice. A sought-after speaker on the law of adoption and reproductive medicine at numerous seminars and forums, Lori has also served since 1998 as a faculty member of the "Adoption Law and Practice" seminars sponsored by the State Bar's Institute of Continuing Legal Education in Georgia. She gives of her time as a prolific speaker at Resolve symposiums on adoption, Hands On Atlanta, Feminist Women's Health Center, Charis Books, Atlanta Pride, and numerous other community events. Lori stands out for the palpable energy and passion she brings to her adoption work. She has a gift for educating consumers about family-building options and then working together with clients to develop a plan tailor-made for them. Lori is respected and liked within many diverse groups and communities and has had a profound impact on adoption within the gay and lesbian community, having finalized the adoptions of at least 750 children by gay and lesbian parents. She relates exceptionally well to children of all ages and fills her office with pictures

of clients' children, personal heroes, good friends, and pets. Lori received her Bachelor of Arts in journalism from the University of Georgia in 1984, with a minor in English. She earned her Juris Doctor, also from the University of Georgia, in 1992. In 2001, she was elected to fellowship in the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys. She teaches classes on adoption and reproductive medicine in accredited law schools throughout Georgia. She is the immediate past President of the Stonewall Bar Association of Georgia (the state's gay and lesbian bar association), having served on its Board of Directors from 1998 to the present. Prior to entering private practice, Lori served for five years as staff attorney to the Honorable Hilton Fuller in the DeKalb County Superior Court. With Judge Fuller, she reviewed over 250 adoption cases, where she developed her keen interest in adoption, her mastery of the technical legal requirements, her understanding of the unique importance of adoption in the life of a family, and her insight into the workings of courts in these truly special and important legal proceedings. Lori is a member of the State Bar of Georgia, admitted to practice in all levels of state and federal courts in Georgia, and a member of the Georgia Association for Women Lawyers. Previously, Lori served on the faculty of the National Institute for Trial Advocacy teaching litigation skills to law students, judged law school mock trial and moot court competitions, and co-chaired Law Day for the DeKalb Bar Association.

H A W A I I

Project Visitation

Senator Daniel Akaka

In response to the urgent need to reconnect siblings who have been separated within the foster care system, Judge Mark Browning of the First Circuit Family Court State of Hawaii asked Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii to develop a program to meet this need. Project Visitation was created in April 2001. The focus of Project Visitation is to ensure that foster children are able to maintain their familial bond with their siblings, by facilitating visits through community volunteers. Our volunteers help foster care siblings maintain these family relationships by bringing these brothers and sisters together for monthly visits.

Additionally, community organizations help plan and provide fun events or alternative activities such as Holiday Parties or camps that the children can attend as a family. Project Visitation's goal is to bring these brothers and sisters together, through our community volunteers, in a fun and safe environment, giving them opportunities to create family memories the otherwise would not have.

I D A H O

Rick and Tina Betzer

Senator Mike Crapo

The Betzer family of Shelley, Idaho lives in a former church, which is big enough to provide the growing space and 14 bedrooms they need. But that's not the only unusual thing about this family. In addition to five mostly-grown biological children, Rick and Tina Betzer have fostered some 43 children over time, and have adopted eleven with special needs. Their involvement was sparked by work in juvenile corrections, seeing far too many young people failing without the support and love to break out of bad situations. As their awareness grew, so did their passion to make a difference in the lives of children otherwise destined for institutionalization. Their adopted children came to them different ways: Tina would hear of youth in need and declare "These are our children" — other times, the children found them: "And when that happened," says Rick, "we knew it was just meant to be." The prospect of nurturing so many special needs children may sound too daunting for most parents, but Rick Betzer swears it keeps them young: "It's the kids who keep us going." For the many young lives they have touched and those they continue to love and support, Rick and Tina Betzer are truly Angels in Adoption.

Greg and Shannon Foust

Representative Bill Sali

Greg and Shannon Foust started serving in foster care almost by accident. Nineteen years ago, Shannon went to apply for a job at a real estate office, but got the address wrong. Her mistake eventually led her, with her husband, to 5-years working in a foster family agency and a growing desire to help foster children. After starting their

own family, Greg and Shannon became foster parents in Canyon County, Idaho and have cared for foster children in their home for the past three years. They have fostered two little girls long-term and provided short-term placement care for two little boys. Currently the Fousts have four of their own biological children, one adopted son and a foster daughter. They feel amazed and blessed to see unconditional love and family unity between the children. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare has worked directly with the Fousts to develop a new direction for foster and adoptive care within the state. They believe in the system—in the social workers who spend long hours trying to put families back together, in the administration as it stretches limited funds, in the foster and adoptive families who extend themselves in love, and in the hurting families that are trying to put their lives back together. Because of their belief that foster care can change a young life, Greg and Shannon have trained new foster families and become Peer Recruiters. They have also started Kids Kloset-Nampa Division, as a branch of Idaho's Capitol Christian Center. Kids Kloset provides clothes for children just coming into care whose foster parents have not yet received their first voucher. The Fousts hope that Kids Kloset-Nampa will grow and be able to meet clothing needs for families in the Family Preservation unit—families that have just recently gotten their children back after foster care. Due to their service, Greg and Shannon were named Foster Parents of the Year in Canyon County this year. The Fousts are worthy of recognition in the Angels in Adoption program for their years of loving and sacrificial care to foster and adoptive children. They are committed to providing a loving, nurturing environment for displaced children—and equipping other families to do the same. I am honored to recognize their service.

I L L I N O I S

Karen and Edward Barnes

Representative Jerry Costello

Edward and Karen Barnes are actively involved in the lives of their three adopted children and one foster child. The family works with their children's special needs, such as autism, disruptive disorder, attachment issues and kidney disease. Further, they

continually educate themselves to provide the most supportive home environment possible. Edward and Karen also advocate for their children's needs outside of their home, working tirelessly to ensure that their children have the best resources for positive growth in every aspect of their lives. Edward and Karen are truly worthy of recognition by the Angels in Adoption Award because of their endless love and commitment to their children's development, and they serve as role models for other families facing similar challenges.

Children's Home Association of Illinois

Representative Ray LaHood

Children's Home Association of Illinois has held a long and rich history in Central Illinois; established in 1866 to provide community-based and family-focused programs. Since its inception, Children's Home has provided professional help and holistic care to many families and troubled youth. Their primary care is provided through residential treatment, group homes, and foster care programs. Children in need are taken in on an emergency basis, often referred by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and other state agencies. Caring for children of Central Illinois and throughout the state, Children's Home cares for and watches over those with severe emotional and/or behavioral problems. The children in the residential programs stay for an average of twelve months, necessitating that this organization provide a true home away from home. Children's Home treats and cares for about 100 children in the residential treatment facilities and more than 100 placed in foster homes at a time. Permanency is always their goal. More than a third of the children in foster care through the Children's Home are moved into permanent living situations, significantly exceeding the statewide average. Many of those children experience the blessing of adoption, but it is important to note that the majority of them are placed back with their families. While focusing on the well-being of the individual child and placement in a permanent home, Children's Home also works closely and deliberately with parents and families in need of help. The focus is on the entire family. Serving over 1,000 families and children each month from four locations, Children's Home employs over 400 dedicated staff and utilizes the strength of more than 100 committed

volunteers. This organization is a proven leader in family rehabilitation and foster care development, their mission is strong and unwavering, and it is my pleasure to nominate Children's Home as an Angel in Adoption.

Kathleen Hogan Morrison

Senator Dick Durbin

Ms. Morrison handles all types of adoption cases, including agency, private, agency-assisted, special needs, related, intercountry and interstate. She is well-regarded in the adoption community by other attorneys, staff of innumerable adoption agencies and a myriad of clients who have formed a family through adoption. In addition to the children and families she serves, Ms. Morrison currently is Vice-President of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys, a national association of leading adoption attorneys. She is affiliated with numerous other professional committees and organizations which promote best practices in adoption and strive to educate other professionals and the general public about the on-going need for families to provide permanency for children. In summary, Ms. Morrison's commitment to quality legal services and the promotion of adoption for the benefit of children and their families makes her an ideal candidate for nomination as an Angel in Adoption.

David and Janet Nyquist

Representative John Shimkus

The Nyquists have built their family through adoption. Sydney is 8, and was adopted from Hubei province in China. She has a very inquisitive nature. Emerson age 6, was born in Jiangxi province, China. She is a bright student who loves helping her classmates. Tom, a gregarious young fellow of 4 1/2 can converse on a level quite unexpected for his age. John is 4 years, and he is highly interested in computers. Both of the boys were born in South Korea. The girls have taken violin lessons for more than 4 years, and now brother Tom, has joined them. They have engaged in various sports activities, including softball, soccer, and tumbling. They are a blessing to our family, and the community will benefit from their potential.

Ron D. Carpenter*Representative Dan Burton*

Every year, since 1999, the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, of which I am a proud member, identifies and honors individuals, families and organizations that make a difference in the lives of the thousands of children caught in the foster care system. These people are called Angels in Adoption, and it is with great pride that I nominate Mr. Ron Carpenter of Indianapolis, Indiana as my 2007 Angel in Adoption™. All Hoosier families who adopt children, or who make the decisions and the process surrounding adoption as easy as possible for the families hoping to share their lives with children, are worthy of praise and support. But the Angels in Adoption Award recognizes the extraordinary commitment of some to adoption; those who are so full of compassion and generosity, and who have inspired countless others to show the same compassion and caring for children in our state and around the world. I believe Ron Carpenter is a perfect example of those who go beyond the call of duty to be there for the children and the parents who need them. Whether working to raise public awareness of adoption as President of the Children's Bureau Inc., or just working to place one child at a time with loving parents, for well over 20 years, Mr. Carpenter has dedicated his personal and professional life to adoption. Through his leadership, Ron has advocated and supported the adoption of "older and harder to place children." He has worked hard to highlight the children in the welfare systems that are desperately waiting to be adopted. Ron is keenly aware of the various cycles of adoption and how different life milestones such as becoming a teenager, birthdays, marriages, and births of children can influence the adoptee and the family unit as a whole. Ron continues to ensure that any family that has been touched by adoption can access free services at any time. Ron Carpenter is truly an inspiration to us all, and every Hoosier should feel proud and fortunate to have a man of such skill and passion looking out for the needs of our children. I am deeply honored to name Ron Carpenter as my 2007 Angels in Adoption Award recipient.

Teresa Harless*Representative Mark Souder*

Terri has adopted two boys, Dale 17 and Joshua 11. Both have significant special needs. Dale is non verbal, has autism and mental retardation. Joshua has severe emotional issues from neglect. As Terri journeys through fostering, she has found that the more "normal" kids are treated while with her, the more growth and maturity Terri sees coming out in them in their words and deeds. Terri has a wonderful village of support for all her kids. Her kids have been woven within their family. They are so blessed that our community supports are strong and blind to the challenges of the children in Terri's home. Their church embraces the family and their unique needs. A special membership class was designed so Terri's kids (and even former foster children) could join the church. The sense of belonging and commitment witnessed as they walked that process was life changing. Both of Terri's boys, as well as another foster son are in Boy Scouts. Sharon Andersen, "Grandma" to Terri's kids was instrumental in starting the first all autistic Boy Scout troop in Indiana. She did that to meet the needs of her grandkids. Youth group is a big part of our family life as well as attending church. Terri and her boys volunteer individually and as a family, and has become a way of teaching her kids to help others rather than feel sorry for yourself. The kids belong to the Jesters, a drama troop sponsored by St. Francis University and art classes. Their home is more of a teaching and training home. Everyone learns how to keep up on housework, yard work, cooking, planning parties, sewing, first aid and kindness to each other. Each member of the household is instilled with the thought that they have value and worth, and are an important part of the family unit. Terri maintains contact with Josh and Dale's biological families. This has helped in giving the "men" comfort in knowing where they came from and where they are going. It has balanced their outlook on life and helped them to deal with the sense of loss that comes with being in foster care and adoption. Terri is currently involved in the following: former Allen Co. First Steps Council, Graduate, Indiana Partners in Policymaking, InSource Advocacy Training, Guardian for several individuals with disabilities, Educational and Disability Rights Advocate, Family to Family State Systems Change Committee,

founding member of Partners in Transition for Northeast Indiana, Foster Parent for EasterSeals ARC of Northeast Indiana, guest speaker on advocacy issues, and most of all, mother and grandmother to many.

Patricia Irwin Johnston*Representative Julia Carson*

It is my honor to nominate Patricia Irwin Johnston for the 2007 Congressional Angels in Adoption Award. Pat has worked quietly, tirelessly and selflessly to improve the lives of children and families through her work as an adoption educator, author, lecturer and, most importantly, mother. Pat Johnston was born and raised in Indianapolis, Indiana. She earned her degree in Library Sciences from Butler University. In the 1970's, she and her husband began looking into adoption and found there was little information available so Pat, armed with a degree in research, decided to do something about it. She had a vision of providing a resource for the community on adoption and infertility issues and in 1979, she became involved with RESOLVE (an infertility information and support network). With the assistance of two colleagues, Pat conceived of and planned the first consumer symposium on infertility held anywhere in the world. Since then she has not looked back, time and time again proving herself to be a leader in the field of infertility and adoption. She has written numerous books on the subject of adoption including *Understanding Infertility: Insights for Family and Friends*, *Taking Charge of Infertility*, *Launching a Baby's Adoption*; *Adoption is a Family Affair: What Relatives and Friends Must Know*; and *Adoption: Sound Choices, Strong Families*. She has more accomplishments than can be named, but among them I will list her work as a frequent lecturer around the country as well as a columnist for *Adoptive Families Magazine* and a frequent contributor to numerous other publications. Meg Sterchi, Executive Director of Adoptions Indiana, had this to say about Pat, "Over the 11 years that I have come to know Pat she has become a mentor to me and I feel very blessed to have her available to me professionally and personally. I, like others, seek her out when I have a difficult situation and she provides resources and assistance that meet the need. I trust her wholeheartedly, as does the adoption community at large." Pat's incredible

passion for adoption education was sparked by her own journey through infertility to adoption. She and her husband, Dave, an adult-adoptee, have adopted three children: Joel, Erica and Lindsey. Joel and Erica have graduated from college and are now pursuing their careers and Lindsey is getting ready to graduate from Howard University. What started out to benefit the Johnston family has assisted adoptive families throughout the United States. Congratulations, Pat, and many, many thanks for all the hard work you do on behalf of the children and families of Indiana and throughout the United States!

Miriam Project*Representative Mike Pence*

Madison Park Church of God established the Miriam Project in response to the need for adoptive services in Madison County. Remarkably, after Jim Lyon, senior pastor, publicly shared his story of adoption, many people, inspired by his experience began to explore the possibility of adoption for their own families. Doug Linville was hired as the Director of the Miriam Project in 1998 to help complete the license process and to get the agency started, and he continues to serve as the Director. The Miriam Project was licensed by the state of Indiana in 1999. Doug, as the only employee for the first couple of years, has provided support and counsel to both the birth and adoptive families. As the program grew, the Miriam Project hired a part-time case worker and together, they provide loving care and support birth moms and their families as they struggle with the decision about what is best for their child. They also provide mental health counseling to birth moms to help them through the grieving process. For adoptive families, they provide home studies as well as walk with them through the process of receiving a child into their home and provide post-placement visits for the first year of the adoption. The Miriam Project has helped many children find loving safe homes where they can thrive and grow in the knowledge that they are loved by both their birth and adoptive families.

The Villages of Indiana*Senator Richard Lugar*

The Villages is Indiana's largest child and family services not-for-profit agency serving over 1,200

children and their families every day. The Villages was established in 1978 through an initiative of the Lilly Endowment. Its founder, Dr. Karl Menninger, held the belief that a healthy, secure, nurturing family was the most necessary foundation for a child to have in order for him to grow and flourish. Currently, The Villages serves nearly every county in Indiana from its more than 20 offices under the direction of its President and CEO, Ms. Sharon E. Pierce. Among the only one percent of the country's child and family services agencies to be accredited, The Villages just received its National Re-accreditation from the Council on Accreditation. As an industry leader, The Villages strives to provide the best services in child and family care; it also facilitates at least 60 to 75 Special Needs Adoptions annually. The Villages' staff, volunteers, Board Members, foster and adoptive families truly embrace the belief of, "Once a Villages' child...Always a Villages' child!" emphasized CEO Sharon Pierce. "That kind of passion and commitment creates a nurturing, supportive environment which makes adoption truly a life-long process!" The Villages is an extraordinary organization providing loving care for children who have been abused, abandoned, or neglected. Dr. Karl Menninger said it best himself: "Love cures people, both the ones who give it and the ones who receive it." The Villages truly is an Angel showing love to so many Hoosier children.

I O W A

Janice Binder

Senator Tom Harkin

Some people use a negative childhood as an excuse to fail. Janice Binder used it as motivation to help children. Janice, now a proud mother of three sons, is one of the best Guardians Ad Litem in Iowa. There are court-appointed attorneys who feel they had met their obligations if they meet with a child for five minutes immediately before court and then issue a report. Clients often get part of Janice's evenings and weekends. When Janice meets with children, their birth and foster families, she really gets to know them. She represents each client she is assigned with respect and dedication. In one case, a child with a mohawk was being teased at school. His birth mom would not allow his foster parents to change his hair. The

boy felt his haircut and resulting treatment were important, so Janice questioned his mom about the haircut. While on the stand, she finally gave permission for her son to have his hair cut in his preferred style. This might seem trivial to an adult, but for a child trying to make friends in a new school, being able to avoid teasing is likely a significant improvement to his quality of life. Lesser attorneys would not have even realized what an issue this was for him. In addition, Janice supports youth learning self-advocacy skills. She has been a resource to the Cedar Rapids chapter of Elevate, a statewide support group for foster youth that empowers them to engage foster/adoptive parents, social workers, attorneys and judges in better practices. Janice has shared with Elevate her desire for making the local courthouse more child-friendly, and she has let the youth plan how to proceed in that. These are but a few examples of the many outstanding deeds of one heroic woman.

Constance Cohen

Representative Leonard Boswell

The nomination of Judge Constance Cohen has been encouraged by Iowa children who have experienced the foster care system, as well as Judge Cohen's hard work. Judge Cohen has spent 13 plus years working to help children in foster care, encouraging the children to take active roles in their cases. She requires attorneys in her courtroom to take the time to talk to their clients about their experience in foster care and prospective, permanent families. Likewise, she has spent time getting to know the children she works with and recognizes them in and out of the court room. Her commitment has made her a role model for the children she serves. Judge Cohen is a valuable supporter of Elevate, a foster/adoptive support group that enables children to work with the State as advocates for foster care reform. She appeared on an Elevate DVD to enhance the legal system for foster children, offering wisdom and advice to other judges and attorneys. In the fall, Cohen will be accompanying Elevate to provide training at the "It's my Life" conference in Atlanta, Georgia. This event educates foster and adoptive parents on advocacy issues for their children. In addition, Judge Cohen took initiative to bring "Adoption Saturday" to Polk County, an event that celebrates adopted and foster children finding permanent loving homes.

Dave and Judy Ehler

Representative Steve King

Dave and Judy Ehler have been adoptive parents for 19 years and foster parents for 13 years. They adopted their son from Korea nineteen years ago starting their journey in adoption and foster parenting. Later they adopted their foster daughter. Dave and Judy have parented many more children as foster parents for the last 13 years. Since 1994, the Ehlers have provided their love and support for 25 foster children in their Holstein home. Respite care for other foster parents is also something the Ehlers have invested in heavily. While other foster parents travel, leaving their children at home, Dave and Judy have looked after them as well. Dave works for U.S. Congressman Steve King as his District Director. In this position he is able to provide Congressman King with his direct experience relating to adoption and foster parenting issues. He is able to provide real-life insight on issues affecting foster children and their families. Judy works to make sure that every foster child in their home has the care and love they need. Often this entails a busy schedule of appointments and extracurricular activities. She makes sure that every child has the love and support they need as a member of the Ehler family.

Connie and Dan John

Senator Charles Grassley

The Connie and Dan John family have fostered over 400 children in the past twenty years. In that time, they have addressed the unique needs of many of Iowa's most challenging children. Connie and Dan, along with their children, have opened their home and hearts to many traumatized children. All children know they are loved in the John's home, even if they are not adopted by them. Connie and Dan have an amazing ability to help children heal and prepare to return home or prepare for adoption. Through their efforts, countless children have been able to overcome many obstacles and transition to a "forever" home.

The John's have provided foster care to children in varying states of trauma. Some children came to the family in the middle of the night in the back of a squad car with only the clothes on their back. Some kids arrived too scared to talk with visual, and not so visual scars that run deep. Some children came with fists up ready to fight

anyone who loved them. The John family opened their doors and wrapped their arms around every child who entered their home. All children at Connie and Dan's home have benefited from their therapeutic and nurturing family. The John's adult children have carried on their parent's legacy by building lasting relationships to many of the children who have passed through their parent's home. The John's have been able to teach Iowa's vulnerable children how to trust and love again. Through their hard work and dedication, children have been able to learn how to be kids again; how to show anger without hitting; how to smile and be silly; and that they are valued, worthwhile and special. This loving care has enabled many children to transition from the hurt and anger to a willingness to move on to adoption. Connie and Dan's ability to nurture, prepare and transition children is a true gift.

K A N S A S

Martin W. Bauer

Representative Todd Tiahrt

Martin is the Past President (2005-2006) of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys. He writes the chapter for adoption for all Kansas lawyers. He specializes in resolving contested adoptions and alternatives for seeking permanency for children in appropriate homes. He speaks regionally on best practices and high ethics in the field of adoptions and the best interests of children.

Stuart Griffiths

Representative Nancy Boyda

I am pleased to nominate Stuart Griffiths for the Angels in Adoption program for 2006. Stuart started working with children during college when he was a wrestling coach. He gave rides to and from practice to a young man living in a group home and decided there was more that he could do to help. He began volunteering at the young man's group home – helping with homework, playing ball, whatever was needed – until he was asked to become the assistant director. After working in public schools in Lawrence, Kansas he returned to his home town of Clay Center and became a foster parent. Over the years Stuart has hosted 32 foster children. Eventually he was told

by a caseworker, "You ought to become a social worker because you're already doing it so you might as well get paid for it." So Stuart returned to school and earned a degree in social work. He jokes that he made this decision before anyone told him how much social workers earn. All joking aside, he has devoted the last 8 years of his life to working in child protective services. Part of what makes Stuart's story unique is that he has made a conscious effort to help children with special needs. He told caseworkers he "wanted the kids nobody else wants," and they listened. He was contacted by social workers from surrounding communities to help children who needed extra care and attention. Over the years, he has helped children who were victims of abuse or had behavioral problems grow and mature into successful and talented adults. Stuart now has five adopted sons, ranging in age from 14 to 19. Another remarkable aspect of his story is that he is a single parent. In addition to his job and responsibilities as a parent, Stuart also runs the football little-league in his community and coaches his own team. He is the epitome of a public servant. Despite his tremendous contribution to the community, Stuart is incredibly humble. In his stories he continually talks about the many accomplishments of his sons. When asked about the incredible commitment he has made, he simply says, "I wanted to take the next step."

Nick and Jennifer Keller

Representative Jerry Moran

I am pleased to nominate Nick and Jennifer Keller of Home, Kansas as Angels in Adoption for 2007. The Kellers are the proud parents of a remarkable family with an amazing story. The presence of illegal drugs, specifically methamphetamine or "meth," is a very serious problem in many of the rural communities I represent in Kansas. Although we have made strides in curbing the rapid rise of meth production and abuse in Kansas, the drug still threatens our communities and children, including the unborn. Each year, more than 4,300 Kansas children are born exposed to illegal drugs while in the womb. Among those who have chosen to adopt children with potential drug-related health problems are Nick and Jennifer Keller. During a period of three years, the Kellers and their 17-year-old daughter, Brooke, have selflessly opened their

home to not just one, but six children, each of whom was exposed to methamphetamine prenatally. The children range from six months to eight years old. Five of the children are siblings; three from one family and two from another. Their first two adopted children are Brendan-8, and Victoria-6. The Kellers took in Myah as a newborn, now age two, as a foster child shortly thereafter. Eight months later another newborn Caty, now almost two entered their home as a foster child. Three weeks later, Wyatt, the youngest sibling of Brendan and Victoria was placed with the Kellers by their mother who was incarcerated. This past January, The Kellers adopted their sixth child, Jett, who is a full sibling to Myah. Their decision to be active in the fight against meth is not limited to offering a home to these children. Based on their experiences as adoptive parents, the Kellers have been advocating for important legislation in the state of Kansas to better protect children by allowing authorities to intervene when a pregnant woman is using substances and putting her child at risk. Their work to help drug endangered children – both by influencing public policy and by giving siblings a home under one roof – is a true testament to their dedication and a demonstration of how they are indeed angels for those in need. Thank you for considering this loving couple, Nick and Jennifer Keller, as Angels in Adoption.

Melissa Taylor Standridge

Representative Dennis Moore

As a practicing attorney, Melissa has always been committed to providing free legal work to those that cannot afford representation. It is for this reason that, in 1995, a senior partner at the law firm where she worked asked Melissa if she would be willing to provide pro bono legal representation to foster parents in adoption proceedings. This free legal representation for foster parents was part of an ongoing fund-raising campaign to benefit a local non-profit organization supporting foster children. Melissa readily agreed. Twelve years and many representations later, Melissa is a licensed foster parent and has fostered four children to date, three of which she adopted when parental rights of the birth parents were terminated. Although Melissa became a foster mother and adopted these three children as a single parent, she married Richard Standridge in 2005,

who enthusiastically adopted all three of the children as his own. Richard also has two birth children, who likewise have embraced this new blended family with great devotion. As a foster mother well-versed in the intricacies of a complicated legal system, Melissa has had the opportunity to help not only children, but a myriad of other foster parents and birth parents as well. For example, Melissa serves as chairperson of the Alternative Care Review Board, the purpose of which is to hear grievances from foster, relative, and adoptive parents regarding decisions made by the social services. As chairperson, Melissa volunteers all of her time and is responsible for managing all aspects of hearing and drafting written recommendations. Melissa also provided crucial legal support to a core group of foster parents in the community who wanted to start a support group for foster families. In addition to other foster parents, Melissa devotes a significant amount of energy to helping birth families and was instrumental in coordinating reunification of one of her foster children with the child's birth family. Although it has been five years since this reunification, Melissa stays in close contact with the entire family and her former foster daughter often comes for weekend visits. Melissa also keeps in touch with the birth families of her adopted children in order to facilitate visits so that her children can maintain positive and healthy relationships with their biological families.

KENTUCKY

Brooklawn Child and Family Services

Senator Jim Bunning

Founded in 1851, Brooklawn Child and Family Services is a private, not-for-profit corporation located in Louisville. Brooklawn is committed to serving emotionally troubled boys ages 6-18 who have been abused or neglected. In addition to inpatient care, Brooklawn provides case-management, out-patient therapy, and in home support to children of all ages and their families. I appreciate the hard work and dedication of the Brooklawn staff for helping these young children grow and develop into adults in a safe environment. Brooklawn truly makes a difference in the lives of so many people and the staff is an inspiration to all.

Phyllis Stinson

Representative Ron Lewis

It is true there are many professions which require a wealth of patience intertwined with compassion; however, committing one's life to treating troubled foster children exceeds one's comprehension of such virtues. Phyllis Stinson of Owensboro, Kentucky continuously provides such assistance to youth in the Commonwealth. It is my privilege to nominate Phyllis Stinson as the 2nd District of Kentucky's 2007 "Angel in Adoption." All individuals who nurture the foster care and adoption process are to be commended. Phyllis has committed herself to such endeavors and most certainly deserves recognition for her selfless efforts to better fostered youth. Phyllis has served for two years as Treatment Director for NECCO, a foster care placement agency serving Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia. NECCO is unique in that it accepts many troubled youth that other agencies have excluded. Phyllis' primary role is to provide therapy to such youth, as well as ensure they are placed appropriately. Through her rewarding experiences at NECCO, Phyllis and her husband Terry have taken it upon themselves to become adoptive parents. While the adoption is still being processed, they are elated to have the opportunity to welcome a new daughter into their loving family! Phyllis and Terry are to be commended for opening their hearts to such a calling. It would be such a joy for more fostered youth to be united with such giving guardians. There is no doubt it takes a dynamic, invested individual to work with foster youth. It is clear through Phyllis' professional involvement with such programs, as well as her family's personal decision to adopt, she is unequivocally an "Angel in Adoption." To Phyllis, I extend my sincerest appreciation for all she has done and continues to do for the youth of this nation.

Rebecca Young

Representative Harold Rogers

As a birth mother counselor, Rebecca faithfully works with young women who have made the decision to place a child for adoption. She provides a steady hand and her heartfelt support to young women and adopting families through outstanding counseling services at Adoption Bridges of Kentucky. Her selfless twenty-four hour service, from being present in court to offering a listening

ear, is making a difference in the lives of birth mothers, the new babies, and excited adoptive parents. I am proud to nominate Rebecca Young as an Angel in Adoption.

LOUISIANA

Nancy Miller

Senator Mary Landrieu

Nancy Miller has spent the last 39 years protecting the welfare of Louisiana's children. After Hurricane Katrina, she worked tirelessly with the government of Louisiana and the National Foster Parent Association to meet the needs of foster children who were impacted by the devastating storm. In 2006, Nancy was honored with the YWCA's Racial Justice Award for, among other things, her work with adoption and foster care for African-American children. Over the course of 15 years, she was a single foster parent to four teenage youths. Nancy is the adoptive mother of one of her former foster daughters and a proud grandparent. She lives and works in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Noel E. Vargas, Jr.

Senator David Vitter

Noel E. Vargas Jr. has been an attorney in New Orleans, Louisiana since 1977 and has helped create close to 1,000 families in Louisiana and across the United States and other countries. Over the last 20 years, Mr. Vargas has worked tirelessly to provide insightful and compassionate services to adopting parents, birth parents and their children. In each of those years, he has enriched the lives of children and their adoptive parents through his legal representation in private, agency, international, and domestic placements. Mr. Vargas has assisted members of the Louisiana Legislature in the composition and passage of several of the state's adoption statutes and he is well known for being a passionate adoption advocate. He has been a lecturer at numerous adoption CLE seminars and has served on the faculty of the Baton Rouge College Paralegal Institute. He has been a member of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys for over 15 years and was certified by that group as an adoption mediator. In 2005, Mr. Vargas served as a Judge Pro Tempore for the Juvenile Court for the Parish of Orleans. He currently is executive

counsel for A.B.L. Adoption Louisiana and is on the adoption agency's board of directors. Mr. Vargas was presented the 2006 Leadership in Law Award by New Orleans City Business as one of the 50 outstanding lawyers in New Orleans. Despite the devastation and upheaval wrought by Hurricane Katrina, Mr. Vargas has not wavered from his commitment to his clients in helping with the community's rebuilding process by building families through adoption.

MAINE

Paula Benoit

Senator Olympia Snowe

As a member of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption, I couldn't be more proud to nominate State Senator Paula Benoit for the Angels in Adoption 2007 award in recognition of her co-sponsorship and bipartisan leadership of legislation, which is now the law in Maine, allowing adult adoptees access to their original birth certificate. The fact that Senator Benoit achieved this landmark measure in only her freshman year in the state legislature speaks volumes about her dedication and skill as a public servant, and her actions combine transparency and truth that together will profoundly enrich and enhance the lives of adoptees, foster children, and orphans. What a tremendous program and a fitting tribute to a most-deserving recipient!

Maine Leaders of Legislative Effort to Enact Adoption Law Providing Adoptee Access to Original Birth Certificates

Representative Tom Allen

I am pleased to nominate for recognition as 2007 Angels in Adoption the leaders of the successful effort to enact an adoption law in Maine providing adoptee access to birth identity. These citizens played key roles in the enactment on June 25, 2007 of LD 1084, a law that will allow adult Maine adoptees to obtain their original birth certificate without the need to petition probate court, starting January, 2009. These legislators and advocates—Maine State Rep. David Farrington, Maine State Senator Paula Benoit, Bobbi Beavers, Cathy Robishaw, Peter Jensen, Sally Group, Sandy Beal, Joan Beal, Neil Hulbert and Martha Hulbert—

worked together and individually to obtain this landmark legislation. While many other Mainers contributed significantly to this effort, the nominees' contributions stand out as particularly worthy of recognition. By honoring this group, the award will recognize the power of working together on a common, worthy goal. Like many states, in the 1950s Maine passed laws that veiled adoption in secrecy and untruths. In 1953, Maine law was changed to require that birth certificates issued to adoptive parents indicate that the child they were adopting had been born to them. Starting in 1959, adoptees' original birth certificates were sealed and made unavailable to inspection without a court order. Today, we better understand the value of truth to all the parties involved in an adoption. The fears which prompted officially-sanctioned concealment were largely unfounded, and rather than protect the parties against stigma, the approach of Maine laws may have reinforced it. Other states which have passed laws similar to LD 1084, such as Oregon, Alabama and New Hampshire, have not experienced the problems that opponents of reform predicted. Maine has included a provision in its new law that empowers birth parents to fill out forms that spell out their medical history and indicate their preference about being contacted by the adult adoptee. Thus, an adult adoptee will have a better idea of whether a birth parent would welcome contact by him or her. Most of the nominees have been participants in an adoption, and their personal experiences provided them with unmatched understanding of and commitment to the issues adoption raises. Senator Benoit, Cathy Robishaw and Sally Group are adult adoptees; Bobbi Beavers, Matha Hulbert and Peter Jensen are birth parents; Sandy and Joan Beal are adoptive parents. Each of the nominees worked tirelessly and effectively on this project. Their contributions were complementary and comprehensive. Bobbi, Cathy and Peter began the process, as founding members of Original Birth Certificates for Maine (OBC for ME), the group that initiated the effort to bring a bill before the Maine legislature modeled after the successful New Hampshire legislation. Cathy and Bobbi went on to organize and arrange monthly grass roots legislative meetings. During the 2006 and 2007 legislative sessions, Bobbi and Cathy lobbied agencies and lawmakers in Augusta, and worked to get the word out in the

press. Peter created and maintained a website that kept adoptees, adoptive parents and birth parents updated as the bill moved through the legislative process. Sally, Sandy and Joan contributed first-hand information about inequities in the then-current law, and the medical and psychological basis for an adult's right to access his or her birth identity. Neil provided legal and statistical advice and analysis; Martha, a retired adoption therapist, lobbied and worked with Senator Benoit in developing ways to talk about the issues. In the State House of Representatives, David Farrington, whose wife is an adoptee, was the lead sponsor of LD 1084 and provided regular advice on procedures and strategy. In the State Senate, the effort was led with equal effectiveness and compassion by Senator Paula Benoit. Rep. Farrington's quiet voice of reason helped lawmakers understand the purpose and effect of the proposal and why existing law was unfair and arbitrary. Senator Benoit's personal testimony helped many legislators reject the myths that tend to surround the issues, and to understand why this law was needed. Both brought passion, diplomacy and considerable skill to the task, ensuring that the debate focused on the merits of the bill. The adoption process can arouse conflicting feelings that become more confused when facts are withheld. The legislation that these individuals sought and obtained in the State of Maine will allow the sunshine of knowledge to illuminate the lives of those affected.

Susan Potter

Senator Susan Collins

Susan Potter has three children, two of whom are adopted. Joseph, now 23, came home from Bogotá Colombia in October 1986. In August 2000, a friend called Susan about a column by Eileen McNamara in the Boston Globe, detailing the story of a Cambodian-born toddler who had been brought to the United States by the Sharing Foundation for medical treatment, overcoming incredible odds. Born on May 11, 1998, Maya was diagnosed with Pallister-Hall Syndrome (PHS). Most children with the extremely rare disability die in infancy. Due to her precarious health, caring for her was considered futile. Dr. Nancy Hendrie, President of the Sharing Foundation and a retired pediatrician, brought Maya to the United States and arranged with Massachusetts General Hospital

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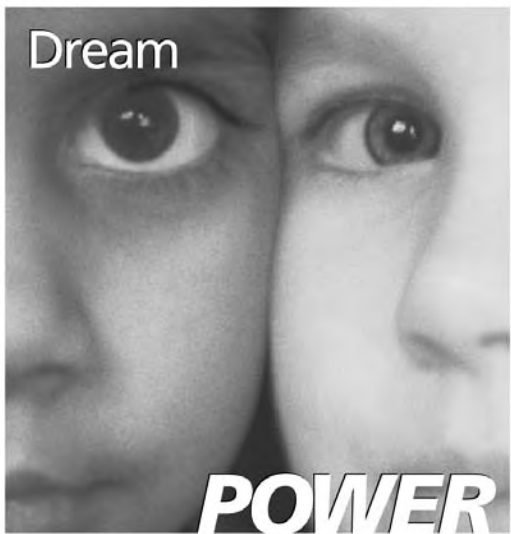
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and Dr. Dan Ryan for care unavailable in Cambodia. Maya arrived in April 2000 at 23 months of age, weighing only about 10 pounds. Over a five-month period, Maya underwent six major surgeries. Now the young girl was available for adoption. Moved by the child's story, Mrs. Potter and her husband applied to adopt the child, whom they named Maya. Approximately 70 families applied to adopt the still fragile Maya, and according to Mrs. Potter, "we were lucky enough to be picked." Under the care of her new family, Maya has undergone additional surgeries and a great deal of developmental therapy. Maya, who as an infant was certain to die in a Cambodian orphanage, started kindergarten on time. Now nine years old, she is a happy and healthy fourth grade student who loves gymnastics. Maya currently works with a one-on-one educational technician, but it is estimated that in the near future, she will no longer need the additional assistance. Mrs. Potter has truly defined what it means to be an "Angel in Adoption." She says her daughter is a perfect case study for what early intervention can do for children. "She [Maya] is the single most amazing human being I have ever known in my life," stated Mrs. Potter.

MARYLAND

Diana England

Representative Chris Van Hollen

I am proud to recognize Diana England for her outstanding work with the adoption of disabled children. Two of Diana's three children were adopted from Russia, including a son who had developed a physical disability while in an institution in Russia. Her son's difficulties inspired her to help abandoned children, particularly those with disabilities in Russia. She and her husband, Richard England, Jr, created a fund that helps American couples adopt Russian toddler boys, children who are often overlooked in adoption. Diana and Richard also work with programs that support the adoption of older children. Diana has worked extensively with Firefly Children's Network (FCN). As an original board member of FCN, Diana helped to develop an early intervention strategy that is becoming a model in Russia. FCN uses this strategy to prevent child abandonment by providing training and education to parents of children with dis-

abilities. FCN provides classes and support for parents to show them how to care for their children instead of placing them in orphanages, and works with Russian leaders to encourage Russians to adopt children. It recently achieved a great triumph in gaining the Russian government's support for closing orphanages and placing children with families. This dramatic shift in attitude has created a wonderful opportunity to provide a better future for millions of children. I am proud to represent Diana in the U.S. House of Representatives and am honored to recognize her as an Angel in Adoption.

Donna and Steve Hill

Representative Dutch Ruppersberger

Donna and Steve Hill originally came to Baltimore County DSS interested in adopting one child, a boy. They had three daughters and were very much interested in adding a son to their family. The agency placed a young boy in their home that lacked impulse control and required a great deal of time, attention and therapy. They were presented with many more challenges than they had expected. Several months later the agency learned that a sibling of this child was also in foster care in Baltimore City, in a therapeutic foster home. When approached about taking this second child, a girl, the Hills again stepped up to the plate. In an effort to keep the siblings together, they agreed to be parents for this special needs little girl as well. When the sibling was placed with the Hill's, she had to share a room with the Hills' youngest daughter. After a short period of time, it was evident that the two girls, being so close in age, were in constant rivalry due to lack of their own space. Therefore the Hills made the decision to put an addition on, to assure that this placement would work. Though the two children were biological siblings, they had never lived together since coming into foster care and had not formed any significant attachment to each other. The foster son was struggling with multiple emotional challenges, and the Hills pursued intensive individual and family therapy to stabilize both placements. The Hills adopted their ten year old daughter on March 23, 2007. They are still working toward adopting their foster son, who has expressed some reluctance because of ties to his biological father. This family has consistently put the needs of the children first. They have dealt with many difficult situations,

while at the same time providing a stable, loving home environment for the children in their care. In addition, if this family had not gone over and above their original request to adopt one boy, these two siblings would not have had the opportunity to live together.

Madeleine Krebs

Senator Benjamin Cardin

Madeleine Krebs is an outstanding social worker who has dedicated her 40+ years of professional work to the well-being of children. As the Clinical Director of the Center for Adoption Support and Education, Ms. Krebs provides services for abused and neglected children who are preparing to be adopted, and for those children who have been adopted from the Child Welfare system and are in need of post adoption services. Ms. Krebs is an outstanding clinician, consultant and trainer whose expertise helps new parents to be patient, understanding and sensitive to the needs of maltreated children and works with the children to help them adjust to their "new" families.

Cheryl Willis

Representative Albert Wynn

Cheryl Willis is the Paralegal Adoption Coordinator for the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, Maryland, and as such, she has devoted her professional life to adoption. She goes beyond the call of her job duties, collecting back to school supplies for adoptees whose final hearings coincide with the beginning of the school year, and holiday gifts for children whose final hearings coincide with the holidays. Any remaining gifts are distributed to foster care children. Her work reaches beyond just the children she affects. She gives her time, free of charge, and teaches attorneys the proper procedures for filing for an adoption proceeding. She also assists the pro se petitioners to ensure they work with the Maryland Rules of Procedure, often times giving up her lunch hour to work around the petitioners' schedule. Ms. Willis has a gift for getting to the heart of the matter, and the ability to make common sense recommendations to the presiding adoption judge. She is able to look beyond the case and see the children whose lives and futures are changing. She is an unsung adoption hero, and deserves to be recognized for her work.

MASSACHUSETTS

Julianne Early

Representative William Delahunt

Ms. Early is a person of great character and moral fortitude. Her numerous, selfless acts on behalf of others are notable and should not go unrecognized. For a period of years, Ms. Early has provided outreach supportive services to the homeless population on our streets, dedicating her efforts to re-integrating them back into society and has a track record of successful outcomes. Her battle with cancer for over 5 years has not stopped her devotion to helping others. This includes her three children she adopted over 6 years ago from China. These children were in dire straits, suffering from poverty, severe physical abuse and suggested sexual cruelty. As an adoptive parent myself, I am particularly impressed with Ms. Early, and her unwavering commitment to her adopted children. She truly does God's work. This award is something she greatly deserves and recognizes how much she has impacted the lives of others.

Sheila Frankel

Representative Edward J. Markey

It is my great pleasure and honor to select Sheila Frankel of Lexington, Massachusetts to receive the 2007 Angel in Adoption award. Sheila has been an outstanding advocate for adopted persons, birth parents, and adoptive parents in her more than thirty years of work in adoption search and reunion. For the past twenty-five years, Sheila has served as the Adoption Search Coordinator for the Massachusetts Department of Social Services. In this role, Sheila provides invaluable services to individuals who are searching for information related to their adoption record. Her exemplary work has helped thousands of adopted persons learn for the first time about the circumstances surrounding their adoption, about their racial and ethnic background and about important personal health information. Sheila also works tirelessly to assist adopted persons who wish to be reunited with their birth parents by not only providing them with their adoption record but by offering them the support and guidance that they may need throughout the emotional process. Sheila treats each case with a great deal of compassion as she works to help

reconnect families. Sheila truly understands the complex issues that individuals who have been touched by adoption may face throughout their lives. Her colleagues have told me that they are constantly turning to Sheila for advice and mentoring as she is always willing to share her knowledge. One of Sheila's colleagues wrote that Sheila's "expertise and devotion to adoption search and reunion is unparalleled," while another colleague explained that Sheila "has truly been an angel to many people and continues to do her work with grace and charm and consideration." It is because of this exceptional commitment and dedication to the adoption process that I proudly select Sheila Frankel to be a 2007 Angel in Adoption.

Kristen Fudge

Representative John Tierney

Kristen Fudge, of Newburyport, Massachusetts, is a deeply dedicated adoptive parent and a teacher at the Kennedy School in Somerville. In March 2004, Kristen and her husband, Peter Baisley, adopted their daughter, Isabel, from an orphanage in Lobnya, Russia. Isabel, now four years old, has siblings that remain in other Russian orphanages. After adopting Isabel, Kristen worked tirelessly to research and locate Isabel's siblings. She tracked down two of Isabel's brothers, Nikoli, 13, and Dimitri, 15, in an orphanage in Tuchkovo. After finding them, she called the orphanage's director and asked what she could do to help. The result was an ongoing drive that Kristen operates with her Kennedy School students, entitled "Operation Russia," to raise money for the orphanage. Through the drive, during the holiday season last year, the school was able to send the orphanage several needed items, including quilting fabric, costumes, and a Santa suit. Kristen also continues to send presents on her own to Nikoli and Dimitri. Kristen's unending work on behalf of Isabel and so many other orphans is nothing short of inspirational, as evidenced by the enthusiasm with which her students now also engage in the effort.

Mary Wallace

Senator John Kerry

It brings me great pleasure to nominate an outstanding mother, Mary Wallace, for the Angels in Adoption Award. Since 1978, Mary Wallace has

extended her home and heart to care for foster children, serving as a foster parent to more than 100 children. She recognizes the crucial need to care for children placed in foster homes and has worked to provide permanence in the lives of these children. A proud parent of nine children, some by birth and some by adoption, Mary Wallace is a symbol of extraordinary parenting skills. Despite suffering the emotional toll of the death of her husband in 1996, she has always provided the necessary moral support for all of her children and seven grandchildren. She has continued to utilize her experience and knowledge as an adoptive parent with others as a mentor and co-leader of a monthly adoptive parent support group. She truly has had an enormous impact within the walls of her home as a mother, within her community as a mentor, and as a teacher to the world at large. If there is a committed and true Angel in Adoption, it is Mary Wallace.

M I C H I G A N

Herbert Brail

Senator Carl Levin

Herbert Brail of Dearborn, Michigan has been a strong, passionate advocate on behalf of children in need of homes for many years. As an attorney for over 25 years, he has been actively involved in formulating adoption laws in the State of Michigan. Herbert Brail is the new President of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys, the national association of approximately 330 attorneys, judges and law professors who have distinguished themselves in the field of adoption law, including the presentation of expert testimony before Congress on the post-adoption needs of members of the adoption triad. Mr. Brail is considered among his professional colleagues as one of the best in the country in dealing with adoption issues representing the interests of both birth parents and adoptive parents. What makes Mr. Brail truly deserving of this honor are his countless hours of volunteer work trying to improve the adoption process. He and his wife, Christine, are adoptive parents and have two daughters.

Kent and Marilyn Fannin

Representative Tim Walberg

In 2003, Kent and Marilyn Fannin came to Family Service and Children's Aid in Jackson, Michigan and inquired about providing a home for abused and neglected children. Although they had a young son of their own; they felt compelled to provide for other children who needed them. Within a year of being licensed as foster parents, they began caring for a severely mentally and physically handicapped 7-year-old boy who suffered from cerebral palsy, seizures, and autism. He was non-verbal and functioning as an eight-month-old. Even though the couple recently had their second child, they gladly accepted this little boy into their home. Within six months, because of the Fannin's hard work, encouragement, and support, this young man progressed until he was able to feed himself, walk with assistance, and communicate his needs. In 2005, Kent and Marilyn began attending a Bible and missionary training college and were considering serving on a foreign mission field; however, during this time, the now 10-year-old boy's mother released her parental rights. After spending some time considering the situation, they made the decision to adopt him and decided their mission in life was to help other children like him. In 2006, the Fannins were contacted about a baby girl who needed placement. They chose to adopt her as well. They recently cared for a 1 1/2-year-old legally blind child and have since become the birth mother's support system. When a 9-year-old girl needed emergency placement, Kent and Marilyn helped nurture her through a traumatic time. Caseworkers describe the Fannins as patient, generous, understanding, nurturing, stable, considerate and selfless. They treat children, families, and workers with respect and are always willing to go the extra miles for a child in need; they are never negative. They carefully and prayerfully consider which children they can be most effective with. They do not seek attention for themselves and as for nothing in return. They have dedicated their lives to helping needy children.

Kim and Scott Hewitt

Representative Dave Camp

Kim and Scott Hewitt epitomize all that is good about foster parents. The Hewitt's turned to foster care not only to add a sibling for their bio-

logic daughter McKenna, but also to support a child in need. As teachers, both Kim and Scott understand that all children can succeed with the love and support of a strong family. The Hewitt's have relied on their strength as a family to deal with Samantha's illness that went undiscovered for several months. Instead of having the Samantha moved from their home, they have taken on her illness, researching her condition, treatment options, and physicians who are best suited to meet her needs. The Hewitt's have given Samantha what every foster child deserves, a stable and loving family that looks out for their best interest. Kim and Scott will soon finalize the adoption of Samantha, which will further strengthen the bond of the Hewitt family. The selfless efforts of the Hewitt's are commendable and I am proud to recognize them as an Angel in Adoption.

Bruce Veltman

Representative Peter Hoekstra

It is an honor to select Bruce Veltman for the 2007 Angels in Adoption Award. Bruce approached foster care and adoption two years ago, in an attempt to build a family and to make a positive difference in the lives of children who had been abused and or neglected. Prior to be employed as an Animal Control Officer, Bruce worked for Hudsonville Police Department as a detective and had the opportunity to work with many children and adults who were victims of violent crimes including abuse and neglect as well as sexual abuse victims. Bruce understood that his life would change dramatically; from a single male to that of father, role model and mentor. Bruce has accepted parenthood humbly; not just recognizing the impact he has made on his children, but the impact his children have left on him. Brady and Payton were replaced several times before finally meeting their adoptive father, Bruce. Brady and Payton first entered the foster care system in April of 2002 at the tender ages of 7 and 2. Their birthparents rights were terminated in September 2003, at that time, the children were state wards, which meant they were legally available for adoption. Brady and Payton were faced with many obstacles throughout their journey through the foster care system, throughout their journey all they wanted was a forever family to call their own. Bruce was "matched" with Brady and Payton

through the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE). Bruce had the opportunity to review the children's information and felt his family was the best family to meet their needs long-term. Bruce met Brady and Payton on June 8, 2006 and on June 23, 2006, Brady and Payton moved into Bruce's home as a foster care/pre-adoptive placement. Bruce graciously opened his home to the children after only 3 visitations with them in order to provide them with a loving, stable foster home and ultimately a permanent forever family. Bruce was faced with challenges with the children when they were first placed in his home as the children and Bruce were learning about each other and were anxiously waiting for the moment they would become a permanent family. Throughout the transition into Bruce's home he demonstrated to the children his love and compassion for children in need and from the very beginning was committed to what he referred to as "his boys." Brady and Payton's adoption went fairly smoothly and it was relatively easy to get the approval for adoption. During this time, Bruce, Brady and Payton were involved in intensive counseling services in order to work out any issues the children were experiencing due to the abuse and neglect they experienced in the past. During the six-month supervision period, there was tremendous progress in the children's behaviors and you began to see them attaching to their soon-to-be adoptive father, Bruce. The children would often ask, "when are we going to be adopted", they also expressed fears that they would be moved again if Bruce decided not to adopt them, because this had happened to them on several other occasions. Bruce reassured the children that he was going to be their adoptive father permanently and that he was not going to change his mind. Every time someone would discuss the children with Bruce he would "light up", and would always make positive comments about Brady and Payton; he was so proud to be the parent of Brady and Payton despite the challenges he faced and would continue to face throughout the years to come as the children grow older. Brady and Payton's adoption is categorized as an Older/Special Needs placement. School-age children are considered a "special needs adoption" because they have gone through the separation from their birth parents, been the victims of abuse and neglect, are older and in Brady and Payton's

case are a sibling group. Many people consider adopting older children with special needs as risky, particularly adopting two children with special needs who have been waiting for a permanent family for as long as Brady and Payton did. However, some children just need a stable, loving environment and a family who is willing and ready to except the challenge. Brady and Payton's adoption was finalized on May 14, 2007. Prior to finalization, Bruce stated, "I am ready to have my boys become a permanent part of my family; I cannot imagine my life without them. From the very beginning of this adoption journey, Bruce was committed to Brady and Payton; he never once showed any hesitancy in adopting two children, who had it not been for Bruce, would likely still be waiting for that forever family. I am honored to select Bruce for the "Angel in Adoption" award. He is truly an Angel.

Trisha and William "Dave" Watkins

Representative Vernon Ehlers

Dave and Trisha Watkins are a faithful, committed, and energetic couple who have poured their lives into Older/Special Needs children through foster care and adoption. Since becoming foster parents in January 2004 the couple has fostered nineteen children. They have adopted three older/special needs children, George and Shanice (14 and 13 years old) and Darrell (14-years-old). The family is in the process of adopting two other children which will reunite a child they adopted with his biological brother (6-years-old) and sister (4-years-old). The family is also interested in adopting a sixth child that has been placed in their home for almost one year. Dave and Trisha have been married since 1999 and live in Belmont, Michigan. Dave is an assembly worker for Gentex Automotive and Trisha is employed by Clark Retirement Community as a Human Resource Manager. Although both Dave and Trisha work full-time they are able to spend quality time as a family and provide the children with a positive family experience. The three adoptive children express that they love their parents and from the moment they stepped into the Watkins' home it has been their home too. Dave and Trisha support Bethany Christian Services wholeheartedly. Each time they are called for a foster care placement they prioritize this child or children in order to pro-

vide him/her with a safe, loving home. The couple has also supported Bethany Christian Services through community awareness events and has participated in foster parent events. Trisha has also expressed an interest in becoming a Foster/Adoptive Parent Trainer. Although the couple is not able to conceive, they strongly desired to have a family and be parents. After over a year of discussing the issue of adoption the couple decided to attend Bethany Christian Services' foster parent and adoption training. After leaving the training, the couple was under the impression that the daily per diem rate discussed at the training was how much they themselves would need to contribute to support each child in their home. That night the couple went home and poured over their budget to reconfigure their finances in order to provide for the children that would be placed in their home. It was not until later that they realized that they were not responsible for paying that per diem rate, but that it was monies provided to them in order to offset the cost of caring for the kids. It is a testament to the family's love for children that regardless of the sacrifices they knew they would need to make, the couple continued pursuing the opportunity to provide a safe, loving home for children. Often times people will characterize George, Darrell, and Shanice as "not their own children," referring to the fact that they were adopted. However, Trisha states that she does not like to say that they (the couple) cannot have their "own" children, because she believes that the children they have adopted are their "own." The family states that the confirmation hearing for each adoption has been special. Trisha states that she feels an "overwhelming joy, like I just gave birth to the child." Bethany Christian Services has had the pleasure of working with Dave and Trisha Watkins. It is a great privilege to honor this family with the nomination as an Angels in Adoptions recipient. I truly wish I could clone the family because at some point their home will be full and will not have the capacity to care for more children in this special way. However, Dave and Trisha's hearts will never run out of room as they continue to love Older/Special Needs children.

MINNESOTA

Jim and Harriet Abdo

Senator Norm Coleman

The Abdo's, an Edina family, was in the process of adopting their son Jimmy, when the Lebanon war broke out. Jim Abdo who remained in the United States contacted our office daily throughout this time working with the US Department of State and the US Embassy in Beirut trying to complete the adoption and come home with their baby. Harriet was in the mountains of Lebanon when the war broke out. Her paperwork had to be driven to Beirut and back to the mountain village. "I just need some help getting her home, that's all," Abdo says. His brother Jay advised him to contact Senator Coleman's office. "My fear is that my wife will be stuck in Lebanon and not be able to get out," Abdo says. Harriet and her new son, James Sharbel, sought safety with relatives in a village situated on a mountain north of Beirut. Senator Coleman's office was able to work with Children's Services at the State Department. Once Harriet and Jimmy managed to drive out of the mountains with the paperwork into Beirut, Senator Coleman's office arranged passage for them by ship to Cyprus where they were able to fly back to the United States joining Jim in Minnesota.

Hyun Sook Han

Representative Betty McCollum

Mrs. Han is a child advocate who has spent more than 40 years in helping children and their families for shelter placement and adoption. Recently retired, Mrs. Han spent the last 28 years at Children's Home Society & Family Services (CHSFS) where she was a key person in facilitating the adoption of more than 13,000 children from Korea and other countries. Since her retirement, Mrs. Han serves on the Board of CHSFS where she tirelessly volunteers to continue her advocacy for children who do not have families. Before coming to CHSFS, Mrs. Han was Executive Director of the Christian Adoption Program of Korea (CAPOK) where she was a leader in establishing adoption with families in Korea, and in recruiting hundreds of Korean foster families for children so that children did not have to be institutionalized before they were adopted. Mrs. Han is a strong proponent of international post adoption services where

she established birth land tours, intermediary services, adoptive and birth family openness. She truly has a legacy of innovation in her field of social work, never wavering in her strong belief that children must have a permanent family of their own. Therefore, the Angel in Adoption award is fitting for her life-long services to children and families.

North Homes, Inc.

Representative James Oberstar

There are many individuals and organizations in my Congressional district that make profound contributions in adoption, and this year, I am delighted to recognize North Homes, Inc. of Grand Rapids, Minnesota for their exceptional and dedicated work. North Homes, Inc. provides a wide array of essential services to children and families in Minnesota. From adoption services and professional family foster care to in-home family services and outpatient chemical dependency programs, North Homes, Inc. provides valuable support and assistance to vulnerable children and their families. Since 1990, they have excelled at their mission, "To provide a continuum of highest quality comprehensive care and prevention services for at-risk youth and families in the communities we serve." As a participant with the Minnesota Department of Human Services in the Public/Private Adoption Initiative, North Homes, Inc. works to place children under Minnesota state guardianship in permanent homes with adoptive families. North Homes has a superb record to recruit and train prospective adoptive families to welcome these children with special needs. In particular, North Homes, Inc. has been successful in finding culturally appropriate homes for a diverse population of single children and sibling groups. They also work closely with various Native American tribes in northern and central Minnesota. The excellent work of North Homes does not end with the placement of vulnerable children into adoptive homes. The wonderful staff at North Homes, Inc. understands the vital need for post-adoption services. North Homes, Inc. is a member of the Minnesota Adoption Support and Preservation organization, which is a collaboration of the North American Council on Adoptable Children and the Minnesota Adoption Resource Network. In this capacity, North Homes, Inc. provides ongoing support and guidance to many adoptive parents to help these families secure the

assistance that they need to ensure successful placements. North Homes, Inc. offers traditional as well as innovative support services for these adoptive families. They also offer separate regular adoption support groups for parents and adopted and/or pre-adopted teens. In addition, North Homes, Inc. utilizes their larger continuum of care, including such services as in-home child therapeutic support services, diagnostic assessments, foster care/respite and residential treatment. Through their advocacy and action, the professional staff at North Homes, Inc. has demonstrated that dedicated adoption advocates can make a difference to promote adoption. For their leadership in the field of adoption and child welfare, I am very pleased to recognize North Homes, Inc. as my Angel in Adoption for 2007.

M I S S I S S I P P I

Linda West

Senator Thad Cochran

Linda West started "Mississippi Families for Kids" on her own with the sole purpose of wanting to find adoptive homes for harder-to-place children. It is not only her job – it is her passion. She helps to place children from all over the country. Though the Agency struggles financially, as many private agencies do, Linda is unrelenting in her determination to keep it going and help as many children as possible. I am happy to nominate her for this year's award.

M I S S O U R I

Deborah Hwa-Froelich

Senator Claire McCaskill

Deborah Hwa-Froelich, PhD is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Saint Louis University in St. Louis, MO. She created and is the coordinator for the Saint Louis University International Adoption Clinic. This interdisciplinary clinic is one of few developmental clinics focusing on the unique challenges facing families and their children who are adopted abroad. In contrast to domestically adopted children, internationally adopted children experience a disruption in communication and social-emotional development because they are

abruptly moved from exposure to their birth language and culture to an adopted language and culture. These changes can influence the initial development of communication and social-emotional relationships within the family. Dr. Hwa-Froelich designed this clinic to assess the needs of children and their families in the areas of child and family post-adoption adjustment, child communication, symbolic play, and social-emotional development. The collaborative team offers intervention services in both speech and language treatment and child/family counseling, and provides annual follow-up testing to monitor future developmental progress. The clinic is an outgrowth of Dr. Hwa-Froelich's longitudinal research documenting the acquisition of English, social communication development, and post-adoption adjustment of children adopted abroad. Dr. Hwa-Froelich received the Louis M. DiCarlo award from the American Speech-Language Hearing Foundation and the Outstanding Clinician award from the Missouri Speech-language-Hearing Association for her work with internationally adopted children.

Lois and Tom McDonald

Representative Emanuel Cleaver

The McDonald have impacted hundreds of foster and adoptive parents and children in the Kansas City area. Together Lois and her husband Tom have three birth children. Eight years ago, Lois and Tom made the decision that Lois' calling was for her to leave her job as a registered nurse to foster and then adopt a set of twins who had significant emotional and behavioral special needs. She had found her calling and the McDonalds began their life journey parenting kids with traumatic life histories and has since adopted a drug exposed infant, a sibling group of three girls, and another single girl who had a very traumatic child abuse background. Through the years, Lois and Tom have only increased their commitment to the needs of children in foster care and adoption, working as volunteers with Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association, which is the local foster/adoptive support agency, and assisting in recruiting donors to provide Christmas to hundreds of children. Lois has also worked for years with the Missouri Children's Division as a Teaching Foster/Adoptive Parent, providing the training necessary to help others become foster and adoptive parents.

The McDonalds have impacted the lives of children and families in their community in a variety of ways, and for over eight years in their role as foster parents. In that period of time they have dedicated themselves to the care of over 40 children in the custody of the State of Missouri. Parents to five children by birth, Tom and Lois have added seven children to their family by adoption. As the McDonalds have advanced levels of training and experience, their placements often include kids with chaotic and traumatic histories and challenging behaviors. Tom and Lois first adopted eight-year-old twins who had significant emotional and behavioral issues. A year later, an eight-year-old girl from an abusive background became an official "McKid". An abandoned sibling group of three and a drug exposed infant brought the number of McDonald children to an even dozen...so far. Today, two are working on their Eagle Scout Badges, four are active in community theater, one is on the high school swim team, and one has announced that he is the smartest boy in kindergarten! Tom's notable patience and Lois' education as an RN and experience at a local children's hospital provide the basis for successful transformations in many of the children living in the McDonald home. Both Tom and Lois demonstrate advocacy for Missouri's children as volunteers for the Midwest Foster Care and Adoptive Association. Lois is active on several committees for the Independence School District, and is a representative for Jackson County on the State Foster Parent Advisory Board. The McDonalds continue to advocate strongly for the benefit of all abused and neglected children.

Melanie Scheetz

Senator Christopher S. Bond

Representative Run Carnahan

Melanie Scheetz and her husband are proud adoptive parents of two children (ages 10 & 8). Melanie has more than twenty years of non-profit management experience in the areas of administration and development. She joined the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition as its Executive Director in 1999. At the time, FACC was a two-person office with one recruitment program and a budget of \$120,000. Today, FACC has grown to a staff of eleven employees, managing eight recruitment and retention programs, on a budget of nearly \$1 mil-

lion. Over the past eight years, FACC has recruited more than 1,000 new foster/adoptive families and found adoptive homes for more than 200 hard-to-place children. Highlights of the agency's accomplishments during her tenure include developing recruitment programs and launching an array of retention programs. She is most proud of the agency's work in the successful fight to retain adoption subsidy for Missouri's children, for which they were honored with the North American Council on Adoptable Children's "2006 National Adoption Advocate" award. This fall, the agency will launch two groundbreaking programs. The first is an Adoption Resource Center, where adoptive families can find support. The second is a Finding Families program, which will find relatives of children languishing in foster care. Recently, Melanie was nominated as a candidate for the 2008 Eisenhower Fellowship.

Charles and Dawn Sticklen

Representative Roy Blunt

We have four children: Sarah (14), Chance (10), Katie (8), and Billy (6). Our two boys, Chance and Billy, were adopted from Ryazan, Russia, through the Gladney Center in Ft. Worth, TX. We went to Russia to get Chance in September of 1998, and the whole family went to Russia on Christmas of 2001 to get Billy. We live in Joplin, MO, where Charlie practices law and Dawn is a full-time mom. We are active members of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Joplin, MO. All four children enjoy playing sports, and we are currently keeping busy with football, softball, and cheerleading. We are extremely honored to receive this award, and hope that this program will help bring more awareness toward adoption as a viable, loving way for families to grow. Both domestic and international adoption programs are wonderful ways to unite children with forever homes, and our family strives to promote adoption in a positive way in our community for potential adoptive parents as well as for birth mothers considering adoption as an alternative to abortion.

Robert and Sally Tague

Representative Todd Akin

I am pleased to nominate The Tague Family for Angels in Adoption. Since their marriage the Tague's have chosen to be blessed with children.

Shortly after their marriage Dr. Tague adopted Mrs. Tague's son, Alex. They remained open to adopting additional children even within open adoptions to help the birth mother heal during this time of crisis. After making the decision to adopt locally, the Tague's were awaiting news of an available child when Bethany Christian Service asked if they would be open to an interracial adoption. Relying upon their faith and trusting that all children have the same need for a loving, stable and safe home, they said yes. This was the beginning of Bethany Christian Services St. Louis, Missouri office breaking down the interracial barrier for adoptions. The Tagues have adopted additional interracial children. They are Elizabeth age 16, Bobby age 14, Sara age 12, Susan age 10, Kathryn age 5 and David age 14 months. These children were called "special needs" but the Tague say they are simply "special". The Tague Family very humbly accepts this recognition. However they are pleased to be selected to raise public awareness that a child simply needs love and a stable, faith-filled home in which to prosper.

M O N T A N A

Dennis Lind

Senator Max Baucus

Attorney Dennis Lind with the firm of Datsopoulos, MacDonald and Lind of Missoula, Montana, has been an advocate on behalf of children in need of homes for the past 40 years. Mr. Lind is a member of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys, and he is considered amongst his professional colleagues as one of the best in the country in dealing with adoption issues and one of the leading adoption attorneys within Montana. Throughout his career, he has represented both adoptive parents and birth parents, and has completed hundreds of adoptions in Montana from domestic to international since the mid-1970s. Dennis has also gone beyond his private practice, through volunteer work within the community and state on the issue of adoption. He has participated for many years in educational classes for unwed mothers in the Missoula High School District. Additionally, Dennis regularly volunteers in assisting with training sessions for Montana DPHHS adoption workers. Dennis continues to be a strong advocate for children throughout every

adoption process, and he is an outstanding leader on adoption issues within the State of Montana.

N E B R A S K A

Robert and Cathy Haun

Senator Ben Nelson

Bob and Cathy Haun have been foster parents for approximately six years. They have welcomed a number of children into their home and have played a huge part in the lives of those children and their birth families. Bob and Cathy adopted two children that were unable to return to their birth families in September, 2006. Though these children could not be reunified, they did not lose their birth family when they were adopted. Because of the efforts made by Bob and Cathy, these children were not only welcomed into their home but also were able to continue to have a relationship with their birth families. They get to visit, attend birthdays and holiday activities now with both families. The Hauns ensure they put the children's needs and safety first in an effort to raise them in a manner that will ensure they thrive and grow to be happy and healthy adults. The Hauns are adoption angels and should be recognized for their efforts and continued commitment to these children and all children who come into their home.

Steve and Jennie Mossman

Senator Chuck Hagel

Two weeks before their first wedding anniversary, Steve and Jennie Mossman took in a foster daughter whose mother was struggling with substance abuse. The Mossmans were motivated by Jennie's work as a therapist for children, specializing in children who have been abused and neglected. "We went from newlyweds to parents of a two-year-old with less than 48 hours notice," Steve said, in reflecting on the experience. A week after their foster daughter arrived, Steve was rocking her to sleep the night before a week-long trial when he almost cut the tip off of one of his fingers, resulting in a trip to the emergency room. "To this day, when I appear before that Judge, he still marvels at how I could perform in court with the bandage and through the obvious pain", Steve said. He won the case. From being foster parents, the

Mossmans set off to adopt children of their own. The two oldest – Molly and Martha – were born in the same year, both in California. "As much love as we have for our adopted children, it is no greater than the love that their birth parents have for giving us these gifts," Jennie said. Based upon her experience as a therapist, Jennie is a big believer in the openness of adoptions practiced today. Keeping in touch with birth parents is a regular routine for Jennie. Last September, when Molly was two-and-one-half and Martha not yet two, the phone rang again at the Mossman house. "It was our adoption attorney who wondered if we had an open crib and were interested in adopting another girl," Steve said. The answers were yes and yes. Riley was welcomed into the Mossman home less than 36 hours after the initial phone call. Their foster daughter, now 7, was returned to her mother's care after about three years. Despite some initial rough times, their foster daughter's mother and the Mossmans have become close and their foster daughter still spends as much time as possible with the Mossmans. "Sometimes I look in my rear view mirror and I see three car seats and four children, and wonder how that all happened," Jennie said. In addition to keeping busy with the Mossman girls – the Thundering Herd as they call themselves – Jennie is just as busy in her advocacy. While maintaining her therapy practice, Jennie recently became the Chair of the Nebraska Child Abuse Prevention Fund Board and serves as a member of the Nebraska Child Abuse Prevention Partnership. She also served on the Judicial Nominating Commission for the Lancaster County Juvenile Court. The Mossmans are still licensed foster parents and look forward to an opportunity to provide foster care in the future. "None of this would have been possible without the love of family and friends, including those brave young men and women who entrusted us to raise their birth children," Jennie said.

N E V A D A

Susan Shingleton and Jennifer Blasko

Representative Jon Porter

Susan Shingleton and her partner Jennifer Blasko adopted Mishel Colorado who was born in Guatemala on August 31, 2005 HIV positive and was not receiving medical attention. Her mother,

Myra Colorado, is HIV positive and is actually ill with active AIDS. Early medical treatment for HIV positive children is crucial to the health, welfare and quality of life of that child and in many cases has a direct impact on the child's life expectancy. Susan was advised that proper medical attention was not available in Guatemala City. The time, energy and love they have given so generously has made an impact on the life and the future of baby Olivia. Susan and Jennifer have been active in their community all of their lives. They both work for the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, where Susan was recently promoted to Lieutenant, and Jennifer is a Communications Supervisor. Susan and Jennifer have been Angels in Adoption for the southern Nevada community. We will always consider them our angels and would be honored to have them recognized.

Heather Wilder

Senator John Ensign

The challenges that Heather Wilder has faced in her 13-year life are unfathomable, but she emerged from a horrific early childhood with a smile and a desire to help other children. Her story is remarkable and an inspiration for all. Until she was 7, Heather was trapped in one room with an alarm. If she tried to open the door, her drug-abusing mother and friends were alerted, and she faced their wrath with beatings. In her room, she received one bowl of noodles a day. Heather never attended school and missed out on the innocent, loving, fun years of being a child. Her speech, reading, health, and development were all significantly delayed. She eventually was brought to a government-run home for abused and neglected children, which provided her a far more normal life than she ever knew. After being taken in and nurtured by her own angel, Heather was reunited with her biological father for a period before returning to the loving arms of Tammy Wilder, her former foster mom and her adoptive mom. Heather was a fifth grader at this point and had started keeping a journal as part of her healing process. Those words grew into her first book, "Heather's Hurts," about her pain and experience before and during foster care. Heather is now an accomplished author of 12 books about the foster care system that have reached and touched more than 2,000 children in foster care in Clark County, Nevada. As tragically as

Heather's life started, she has made unbelievable progress and turned her pain into hope for other children. She has been recognized nationally for her achievements and even testified before Congress. Today, Heather is a passionate young woman with a bright future. I am honored to nominate her as an Angel in Adoption—for her commitment to sharing knowledge and hope with children who desperately need an advocate and a friend.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Ann McLane Kuster

Representative Paul Hodes

Ann McLane Kuster is a deserving recipient of the Angel in Adoption nomination. Ann is a dedicated lawyer who has been an advocate on behalf of children in New Hampshire for the past 30 years. Ann is considered amongst her professional colleagues as one of the best adoption lawyers in the country. She has represented both adoptive parents and birth mothers (but not at the same time) and has truly promoted the interests of children in need of homes. In her spare time, Ann tirelessly volunteers many hours to advance adoption law. A few years ago, Ann helped the Director of Family Services rewrite New Hampshire's adoption laws. Last year, Ann worked with the New Hampshire legislature to improve laws for adoptee birth certificates. I am proud to know Ann. We in New Hampshire are lucky to have a woman so dedicated to helping children in need of adoption.

NEW JERSEY

Bud and Michelle Cannaveno

Senator Frank Lautenberg

I am proud to select Bud and Michelle Cannaveno as 2007 Angels in Adoption. Bud and Michelle became foster parents in 1994 when their three biological children were 10, 6 and 4 years old. Since that time they have fostered over 20 children and adopted five children through foster care. Bud and Michelle are outstanding advocates. They have embraced the mission of improving New Jersey's child welfare system both on a systematic level and a child or a family at a time. The word "family" for Bud and Michelle encompasses

all families: foster, adoptive and relative-care families as well as children's biological families. They have a history of working with biological families of children in foster care and have continued relationships with biological relatives of some of their adopted children as well. Some of their adopted children's relatives visit their home regularly and have become extended family members themselves. Bud and Michelle serve as co-trainers for the DYFS pre-service training for foster, adoptive and kinship parents in the Morris County area and work closely with the Morris County DYFS Resource Family Support Unit to help families resolve any problems they encounter. Bud is on the Board of Directors of Foster and Adoptive Family Services (FAFS) and is the Chairman of the Morris County Child Placement Review Board. Michelle is President of the Morris County Foster Parents Association, and she and Bud have volunteered their time as leaders of their local foster/adoptive family community for many years. Bud and Michelle Cannaveno embody the ideals represented in this award. They are "Angels in Adoption!"

Barry and Annette Dambach

Senator Robert Menendez

I am proud to sponsor Barry and Annette Dambach for the Angel in Adoption Award. They adopted their first two children in 1991, Nicolette and Matthew, from Romania. In 1997, they returned to Romania to adopt a third child, Corina, and in 2001 adopted Thomas from Guatemala. The Dambachs—now a family of six—have taken two trips back to Romania so their children could return to their birth country and meet their birth parents. They feel that this connection is vital to their children's emotional and personal development. The Dambach family has appeared on CNN and NBC News to talk about their family. Annette also writes about her family's experience adopting children by contributing a chapter in *Adoption Means Love*. Her chapter, entitled "The Greatest Joy" describes the family's trip to Romania to reunite Nicolette, Matthew, and Corina with their birth families. In addition, Annette and Barry have been active participants in adoption support groups. In March 2006, they presented a program entitled, "Finding and Building a Relationship with Our Romanian Families," at CHATS (Connected Hearts Adoption Triad Support) in North Plainfield,

N.J. As parents, Annette and Barry are involved in every aspect of their children's lives, encouraging each child to fulfill his or her potential. They have received broad community support as a great example of the meaning of family and the importance of adoption. On behalf of the people of New Jersey, I am proud to nominate them for the 2007 Congressional Angel in Adoption Award.

Patricia and Raymond Dansen

Representative Bill Pascrell, Jr.

Patricia and Raymond Dansen of North Haledon, New Jersey have three birth children ages 3 to 9, one adopted child, age 4, and they have fostered 8 other children over the past four years. They have fostered premature and developmentally-delayed children to the point where those children have become healthy, happy toddlers whom the Dansens have then helped to transition into loving adoptive homes. Mrs. Dansen is a stay-at-home mom who receives a wealth of support from Mr. Dansen and their extended family. In addition to fostering, Mrs. Dansen helps the Children's Aid and Family Services Agency to recruit others to foster and adopt. She has helped to arrange meet-and-greet events at her church where her positive experiences in adoption and fostering have led to at least one other adoption so far. The Dansens also receive much help from their children — whenever a new child enters their home, they always ask if their new foster sibling can stay forever!

Dana Woods Fried

Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen

Ms. Fried began her career assisting foster children in finding permanent adoptive families as a foster care caseworker for Albany County NY, Social Services. As her career transitioned to the corporate world, Ms. Fried embraced adoption in her own family. She is a mother of a 14 year-old biological daughter and nine-year-old son, Andrew, whom she and her husband adopted from Guatemala eight years ago. As a result of joining a local adoption support group in Whippany, New Jersey, Ms. Fried's involvement in the adoption community grew. She is currently a board member of Concerned Persons for Adoption (CPFA) and has served for the past nine years as the International Co-Chair, Social Chair, Publicity Chair as

well as the Audio Visual/Logistics coordinator for the annual "Let's Talk Adoption" conference held at The State University of New Jersey at Rutgers. In 2000, Ms. Fried left her corporate job and joined Children's Aid and Family Services, Inc., as the New Jersey Adoption Resource Clearing House (NJ ARCH) Resource Development Coordinator. In this position, she works to develop and maintain more than 1,000 web pages of resource information on adoption, edits the organization's quarterly newsletter, and develops and conducts numerous training workshops. Ms. Fried is truly an unsung hero of adoption. Her tireless dedication to both children seeking adoptive homes and families seeking to share their lives with adopted children, both as a volunteer and a professional, is worthy of high praise. For these reasons, I support Dana Woods Fried for the 2007 Angels in Adoption Award.

Frances O'Toole

Representative Frank Pallone, Jr.

After learning that she lived next door to three young boys, whose father had been murdered, and whose mother had abandoned them, and whose elderly and poor grandmother was taking care of them in a small apartment. Frances decided she had too much to give not to help out. She lived alone in a larger home. After befriending the boys, and taking them to school and after-school activities, she decided she wanted to help even more. After a year of discussions with the grandmother and tracking down the birth mother, Frances decided to adopt the boys. She is now working through the hardship of trying to get the boys all their legal status and citizenship papers. She is also paying her oldest son's college tuition so he may get his higher education. She has truly changed their lives.

Maria and Miguel Perdomo

Representative Steven Rothman

Maria and Miguel Perdomo of Teaneck, New Jersey have dedicated the past ten years of their lives to creating a safe and healthy environment for children in the foster care system. As therapeutic foster parents with Children's Aid and Family Services, Inc. since December 1997, the Perdomos have had the opportunity to share in the personal growth and development of seven foster children ranging in age from 6 to 19 years. In 2006-2007,

Maria and Miguel adopted three of their foster children and are working with the Division of Youth and Family Services on an adoption plan for their fourth. The Perdomos are truly remarkable parents - biological, foster and adoptive. Their recipe for success at first glance appears very basic - treat all of the children equally - with love, acceptance and respect. However, the challenging and remarkable aspect of this formula is the Perdomos ability to remain consistent and sincere each and every day. The children are taught, by example, to respect themselves, each other, their peers, adults, and the family unit. Maria and Miguel are partners in parenting and emphasize values such as honesty, integrity, and the importance of open communication. Two of their sons, one foster and one now adopted, were placed with the Perdomos at the ages of 10 and 8 respectively. These children became integral members of the family and knew they had a home for life. In fact, Maria and Miguel were given custody of these children by way of a Long-Term Foster Care Agreement. However, Maria and Miguel came to understand that the commitment of adoption and being a "forever family" was what they all wanted and needed. Two of the Perdomo adoptive children are biological siblings. A few years ago, an emergency placement was needed for the younger brother of one of the children in the Perdomo home. At the time, Maria and Miguel were very busy with their two biological teenagers, as well as their three exceptional and demanding foster children, and had no plans of adding another child to their very active family. However, when they heard that the youngster in need of placement was the brother of their foster daughter, they immediately agreed to do whatever they could to reunite these siblings. Today, brother and sister are doing remarkably well and are legally and forever "Perdomos".

Patricia Carter-Sage

Representative Jim Saxton

It is a great pleasure to nominate my constituent, Patricia Carter-Sage, for the 2007 Angels in Adoption Award. For nearly 20 years, Patricia has advanced her studies and worked towards successfully uniting families throughout Southern New Jersey. Patricia is a licensed counselor and lives in Marlton with her husband Tim and their

three daughters. Throughout her career, she has continually gone above and beyond in her duties to secure a better future for the many children she has worked with in the New Jersey child welfare system. The New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) is responsible for the largest amount of adoptions in the State. As you know, most of the children in the child welfare system have come in due to trauma or abuse and require specific care to address their emotional needs. Since beginning her work with (DYFS), Patricia has become an invaluable asset to the Division in assisting children and families navigate all the complicated and potentially painful issues that arise during the adoption process for foster care youth. She began her work with DYFS as a consultant for the Counseling and Divorce Mediation Program, she went on to provide therapy for the children in the Jean Frederickson Adoption Support Program and eventually became the Program Supervisor from 1995 to 2002. Although she left that position, her work for New Jersey's children in need did not end. In 2002, she became a certified adoption therapist. That same year she also began instructing classes for the then newly-formed Adoption Certificate Program at Rutgers University. Patricia continues to practice the lessons she teaches to possible future Angels in Adoption. She now consults for DYFS, and her reputation as a successful troubleshooter for the toughest of cases has earned her the respect of the public and private adoption sector alike. Her commitment to her children clients repeatedly leads her beyond her base in Southern Jersey as she will travel throughout the State in order to transition them. Reflecting continued dedicated service, Patricia serves on various committees, such as the New Jersey Adoption Services Advisory Council and has received multiple honors, such as the Family Service Certificate of Excellence and the Outstanding Community Award in recognition of her clinical work and support to adoptive children and their new families. I thank CCAI for providing the forum to applaud Patricia's contributions in helping children and families throughout my District and the state of New Jersey.

Ronald and Jonelle von Autenried

Representative Scott Garrett

Ron and Joni have been actively involved for

more than 15 years with Children's Aid and Family Services, Inc. which has been the largest provider of children's social services in North Jersey for more than 100 years. Ron von Autenried has been a member of the Board of Trustees since 1990, serving as Chair of the Board of Trustees since 2005. Joni serves on the Advisory Board of the Agency's Children's Haven group home for teen boys in Park Ridge. Both are wholeheartedly dedicated to this organization. For years, they have given generously of their time, their money, and their hearts to the many children who need loving homes and the families that open their homes to those children. In addition, Ron and Joni are active members of Our Lady of Mercy parish, where they also spread their love and commitment to their neighbors by leading its ministry for the Overflow Shelter for the Homeless. Their commitment to Children's Aid and Family Services grew from their greatest joy as their two daughters, now young ladies in their twenties, were adopted through Children's Aid and Family Services many years ago. Children's Aid and Family Services has been widely recognized for its outstanding work specializing in foster care and adoption for infants, children, and teens with special needs, including by the Greater Paramus Chamber of Commerce which recently presented the Agency with The Vision Award for forward-thinking, creative, and positive community action. Using the power of compassion, they help those in need fulfill their highest potential and live their brightest futures.

N E W M E X I C O

Mary Jane Lopez

Representative Tom Udall

Mary Jane Lopez selflessly became a legal adoptive parent for the first time in 1993 when she adopted six-month-old Feliciana "Evening Star" Lopez. Feliciana's biological mother was trying to deal with the complexities of her own life. Child Services was threatening to remove Feliciana from her biological mother. Although she was around one side of her biological family, Fish was guaranteed a life of poverty and abuse. Her biological mother was also having custody and relationship problems with the father of her two other children. The identity of the biological father of Feliciana was in question. Then in the midst of her

confusion, the biological mother called Mary Jane to tell her that the situation was unbearable. She threatened to harm herself and Feliciano. Feliciano was in Mary Jane's care two days and almost 500 miles later. Mary Jane has been able to give a good life to the little girl that was born amid much uncertainty. Today, Mary Jane and Feliciano know that they were meant to be together. Mary Jane fulfilled the promise her husband made to Feliciano's biological mother. A promise to give this little girl a good life. A life that was almost ended before it began. There have been some hard times, but neither can live without the other. Feliciano was a family member before she was even born. She is an aunt, and she has the opportunity to know her biological siblings who live across the street. Feliciano gets good grades, attends church a few times a week, and gets to be a normal 13-year-old American girl. Mary Jane saved Feliciano from the cycle that was eagerly awaiting her. However, this is not the only child Mary Jane has given her heart to. While growing up, Mary Jane helped raise her siblings in the logging camps of Northern New Mexico. Later, she went on to become a wife that had many in-law siblings that she helped care for. She was 17 when she became pregnant. Without a high school diploma, Mary Jane had to go out into the world. She and her husband lived wherever they could afford to. Sometimes it was with family. After some time, they began to afford a little more. Then she and her husband split-up. While being a single parent, Mary Jane worked three jobs to make ends meet. She became familiar with the realities of trying to get into a welfare system that was unwilling to help. Between driving school bus routes, Mary Jane worked as a cleaning person. The best food she was able to give her children was the food other people left behind when they vacated the summer rentals that Mary Jane cleaned. On other days, she worked at the local Captain D's Restaurant. The pay was low, and the expense of being a single mother of three was high. When her two older children were of age, they both opted to attend the Santa Fe Indian School, a boarding school. Every weekend the kids would bring home several friends. The half-dozen or so teens all knew her as a person they could turn to when they had a problem or needed to have some laundry done. She also cared for many of her nieces and nephews. It never mattered that

most of them were her husband's family. If they needed a home, Mary Jane was the person they would turn to. Mary Jane was always there to lend them money she didn't have, console them, or cook them a meal. All the while, she took care of her stepfather Bob, Aunt Mary, Uncle Dave, Grandpa and Grandma Brown and her mother. Her ailing mother is the only one that is still living. In addition to caring for several others, Mary Jane still made time to volunteer at her local church every week. Even today, she is a major contributor to the lives of her nine grandchildren, several godchildren, two step-children, and the children of the many young people she cared for. The annual feast day at the Pueblo of Pojoaque, like other celebrations, is the best time to see Mary Jane in action. She is known for being able to sew ribbon shirts, make enough green chili to feed fifty people, and prepare several girls to participate in a Native American ceremony; all in one morning. Mary Jane never had an opportunity to achieve her high school diploma, but all three of her natural born children are college graduates. Throughout her life, Mary Jane has endured abuse, poverty and uncertainty. Many times she ignored her own health and wellbeing because she was busy caring for others. Complaints never escaped her mouth, and she rarely asked for help. Her entire life has been dedicated to thinking of others before she has thought about herself. Mary Jane has adapted to every situation. Therefore, her children feel that she deserves the congressional award for Angels in Adoption.

Rick and Elaine Moody

Senator Pete Domenici

Rick and Elaine Moody began to care for Victor Hernandez, at the age of seven, and his younger sister, Maricela, at age six, as their birth family was in trouble in 1996. The two youths had resided with their father, a migrant farm worker, and three older siblings in a very badly deteriorating mobile home in Deming, New Mexico. Their extreme poverty had attracted the attention of area social workers, as the children were subjected to poor nutrition, no adult supervision, truancy, and squalid living conditions. The Moody's, working alongside the staff of the Tierra Blanca Ranch, a summer placement program for Luna County youth, began to mentor the Hernandez

children. Eventually, the Moody's began to care for Victor and Maricela in their home and were awarded custody as legal guardians by the courts. Victor, now age 17, and Maricela, age 15, continue to reside with Mr. and Mrs. Moody and their two natural born children, Blake and Ericka. The Moody's are currently in the process of legally adopting the two children. Last year, Maricela, was a cheerleader and varsity-level softball player in the Deming Public School system. She also has distinguished herself as an elite gymnast, and a standout All-Star and State champion Little-League softball player. Victor enjoys basketball and anything mechanical (especially his Jeep) and loves to hunt and hike. Both children have adapted well to their environment and now have a bright future ahead of them. The Moody's continue to encourage other families in their church and community to reach out and become foster and adoptive parents, believing that "everyone can make a positive difference in someone else's life." I am honored to nominate Rick and Elaine Moody for their compassion and strength.

N E W Y O R K

Bonnelyn L. and Peter Moses Albanese

Representative Michael Arcuri

Bonny and Peter "Moses" Albanese have dedicated their lives to parenting children. They have been foster parents in Cayuga County for more than 20 years and have opened their hearts and their home to more than 100 children during this time! Bonny and Moses have 3 biological children and have adopted eight teenage foster children, each with their own unique challenges. These eight teens spent years in the foster care system before connecting with Bonny and Moses, finally a place to call home. In the Albanese home, every child is given a chance...sometimes many chances! Patience and the willingness to hang in there during good times and bad, are two of their decided strengths. Bonny and Moses Albanese are people who go above and beyond the call of duty, without looking for acclaim or attention. They primarily foster teenagers with juvenile delinquent and PINS behaviors, however from time-to-time they have also cared for school-aged children and sibling groups. This family is an incredible resource for Cayuga County Department of Health and Human

Services! The Department can count on them at a moment's notice to receive a child, whether it is 2pm or 2am! In fact on one occasion while fostering a pregnant teen, Bonny even delivered a baby girl in the backseat of her car! Bonny and Moses accept each foster child as an individual and provide just the right amount of nurturing and structure to foster their growth and development. They are strong advocates for children and their educational needs. They support and encourage each child's academic goals and accomplishments. Bonny and Moses work in partnership with agency staff and birth parents toward reunification. They welcome birth parents into their home, consult with them on parenting challenges, and build on their strengths. They facilitate visitation, maintain connections with siblings and relatives, and truly epitomize what shared parenting is all about! Bonny and Moses continue their contact with families even after the children have gone home. They often receive cards, letters, and phone calls with updates from those whose lives they have touched. Many photo collages of these "extended family members" are proudly displayed in their home! Bonny and Moses are passionate about foster care, adoption, and their role in the child welfare system. They are eager to learn and further develop their skills in order to best serve the children they care for. Both readily avail themselves of training opportunities and explore community resources. They demonstrate a willingness to grow as individuals so they can in turn help children grow. Bonny and Moses also speak at trainings for prospective foster and adoptive parents. There, they share their passion for working with teens and encourage others to accept the challenge! I am honored to nominate Bonny and Moses Albanese as a 2007 Angel in Adoption and recognize them for their accomplishments in Cayuga County and New York State.

Aaron Britvan

Representative Steve Israel

It is my honor to nominate Aaron Britvan as the Angel in Adoption from New York's Second Congressional District. An attorney at law specializing in private, agency, and international adoption, Mr. Britvan has been instrumental in uniting between three and four thousand families. In addition to being an extremely knowledgeable,

consummate professional, Mr. Britvan has infused his law practice with warmth, sincerity, approachability, and a tangible, heartfelt care for his clients. Inspired by his own experience as an adoptive parent, Mr. Britvan decided to focus solely on adoption law in order to help as many families as possible successfully through the process. He has made his expertise and years of experience available as a mentor to the "Young Lawyers Section" of the New York State Bar Association, in his pro bono legal services, as an instructor in Continuing Legal Education Programs, and as a member of the Volunteer Lawyers Project of Nassau and Suffolk. Mr. Britvan continues to vigorously engage in numerous commitments within the field: He is a Co-Chairperson of the Adoption Committee and a member of the Executive Committee, Family Law Section for the New York State Bar Association, which distributes a pamphlet he has authored entitled "Adoption in New York." He chairs the Legal Advisory Committee and is a Member of the Board of the Adoptive Parents Committee of the State of New York. He consults with the New York State Legislature on the transmission of adoption laws, lectures on behalf of prestigious local colleges, and contributes articles to the Encyclopedia of Adoption. In the past, Mr. Britvan has served as an editor of *Adoption Law Practice and Procedure*, issued by the New York State Bar Association. He has been on the Board of the American Fertility Association, has served as a member of the New York State Task Force on Permanency Planning for Foster Children, a Chairperson of the Adoption Committee and member of the Ethics Committee for the Nassau County Bar Association, and was on the Legal Committee for the National Council on Adoption. His knowledge and sincere care for families is what has shaped Mr. Britvan's law practice into a warmhearted service that benefits the entire community. It is with great pride that I put forth his name to receive recognition as an Angel in Adoption.

Patricia Dietrich

Representative Louise Slaughter

Patricia Dietrich has been nominated by the Erie County Department of Social Services for this award because of her outstanding expertise and service in the field of Adoption. Within the Department as well as the community she is

viewed as a resource for her clinical expertise as well as for her knowledge of policies and procedures. In addition to being a strong resource, Pat is a child advocate. She continues to go above and beyond in her attempt to address systems barriers as well as working on solutions one child at a time. Pat currently serves on the Adoption Subcommittee of the Erie County Family Court. Pat was installed this year as the President of the Coalition of Adoption and Foster Family Agencies (CAFFA), which represents several agencies in Western New York. Pat has shown personal dedication to the children on her caseload as an adoption caseworker and since becoming an Adoption unit about 1 year ago as a caseworker, adoption became her way and at her own expense to make life a little brighter in the life of a child freed for adoption. Since coming to the Adoption unit about 1 year ago as a caseworker, Adoption became her first love. Her educational background has made her especially suited to adoption work because of her ability to reach children at an appropriate developmental level. She has excelled in her work and now is a Unit supervisor and trains new workers in the field of adoption work. For those and many, many other reasons we support Patricia Dietrich for this award.

Rosa Falcon

Representative Tim Bishop

Rosa Falcon became a foster parent for the Alternative to Institutional Placement Unit in December of 1999. She adopted Haley in 2002 and Jose in 2003, two profoundly brain-damaged children who she initially fostered. Since her husband's passing two years ago, Rosa has been caring for these special children all on her own. She devotes her life to the care of her special angels who are now aged 10 and 5. Both are non-ambulatory, wheelchair-bound children, who are non-verbal and will require total care for their entire lives. They are fed by G-Tube and attend Special Education Programs. Her home has been designed specifically to meet all of Haley and Jose's exceptional needs. Her house is ramped, and at her own expense she designed a large handicap-accessible bathroom. Her living room has been converted to a child's play and relaxing area for when they come home from school and are taken out of their travel chairs. When her husband was alive, Rosa took her

daughter for a trip to Disneyworld to celebrate her adoption. She has also taken both of her children to North Carolina for a family vacation. Rosa still continues to foster one handicapped infant at a time, in addition to caring for her adopted children. She makes every accommodation to create a loving, child-oriented, special needs home. Her love and devotion to these children is her lifetime legacy.

John Fusco

Representative Vito Fossella

Judge Fusco has been a tireless advocate on behalf of potential adoptees who come before his court. He has handled many difficult cases and has taken the stigma out of courtroom appearances by holding special "adoption days" where children and new adoptive parents are made to feel very special as they are honored in his chambers. Judge Fusco has taken what in many cases are very delicate cases and has put both adoptive parents and children at ease by involving everyone in every step of the process, and then literally throwing them all a party to celebrate their wonderful day of adoption. Because of Judge Fusco, many families on Staten Island have been made whole through his compassion and empathy.

Laurie Goldheim

Representative Nita Lowey

For the past 15 years, Laurie Goldheim has devoted her law practice to adoptions, and has dedicated herself to couples desperately seeking to have children. In her law practice, Laurie has represented prospective adoptive parents, birth mothers, and birth fathers. In her years specializing in adoption law, Laurie has helped more than 1,500 children find loving homes and has enriched the lives of hundreds of families wanting nothing more than to have children. For approximately 13 years, Laurie has been a member of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys, a not-for-profit national association of attorneys, judges, and law professionals who have distinguished themselves in the field of adoption law. In addition to her law practice, Laurie has proven herself to be an advocate for families by participating in a number of lectures and conferences designed to provide support and information to adoptive or prospective adoptive parents, including the American Fertility

Associates, Adoptive Parents Committee, and the Adoption Law Institute. Based on the many letters of praise I have received from her clients, Laurie has been a zealous advocate for children and families and is truly deserving of the Angels in Adoption Award.

Kevin Harrigan

Representative James Walsh

Kevin Harrigan has dedicated his entire professional life to assisting adoptive families through the legal process. Specializing in family law and adoptive services, over 85% of Mr. Harrigan's case load includes domestic, interstate, intercounty, and contested adoptions as well as birth parent consents. Mr. Harrigan and his staff work alongside multiple local not-for-profit agencies assisting in adoption services, including Catholic Charities, New Hope Family Services, Family Connections, Inc., and Adoption and Counseling Services. He is a member of the Onondaga County Bar Association, the New York State Bar Association, and the American Association of Adoption Attorneys. Despite averaging 80-85 files per year, Mr. Harrigan still finds time to share his expertise with colleagues, serving as a lecturer with the New York State Bar Association's Legal Education Series on Adoption. Mr. Harrigan is a graduate of Hobart College in Geneva, New York, and a 1977 graduate of the Syracuse University School of Law. He has been a principal partner in the firm of Harrigan and Dolan in Syracuse since 1980. Mr. Harrigan's work reveals a true labor of love, and his services have impacted thousands of appreciative New York families across the Central New York, Western New York, Mohawk Valley, Southern Tier, and North Country regions. Kevin Harrigan is a true Angel in Adoption worthy of national recognition.

Pat O'Brien

Representative Jerrold Nadler

Pat O'Brien has been a tireless advocate for older foster children who are often overlooked and lost in the system. He has also been a formidable activist against homelessness, recognizing that children who lack supportive families are destined for hardship. Mr. O'Brien is Founder and Executive Director of You Gotta Believe! The Older Child Adoption & Permanency Movement, Inc., which focuses on finding permanent homes for

teen and pre-teen children in foster care. You Gotta Believe! provides a rare and crucial service that improves the lives of foster children. The organization works with the City of New York to find permanent families for teens and pre-teens in, and is currently working on a federal grant to help New York City find permanent homes for 100 teens living in congregate care facilities. A generous award from the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption allowed You Gotta Believe! to do specialized intensive child-focused recruitment on some of the City's longest waiting children. Mr. O'Brien offers trainings, workshops, and consulting across the country on such topics as the connection between foster care and homelessness, how to prevent homelessness by recruiting permanent homes for teens and pre-teens in foster care, and how unconditional commitment to all children is the essential ingredient in preventing placement disruption and foster care drift. He also produces, and often hosts, a weekly cable access television show and radio forum, "The Adopting Teens & 'Tweens Show", which discusses the many facets of adopting teens and pre-teens from the foster care system. Pat has his Master of Science degree in Social Work from the Columbia University School of Social Work.

Samuel and Barbara Pitkowsky

Representative Charles Rangel

Mr. and Mrs. Pitkowsky are worthy of receiving the Angel in Adoption award from the Congressional Coalition on Adoption because they don't just talk the talk, they walk the walk. Not only are they adoptive parents, they have been actively involved as adoption advocates for over twenty years in the Tri-State New York area. They have adopted two daughters; the older daughter from Honduras, Helen, and the younger daughter, Irene, from Dominican Republic. They have also helped Samuel's brother in bringing adoption to their family by adopting two boys, Hunter and Logan, from Texas. They are both actively involved in the New York Chapter of the Adoptive Parents Committee and have served in leadership positions. The organization has worked to provide adoption education and support to families for over fifty years. The organization has also worked on legislation to protect the rights of children and raised over five thousand dollars during the Katrina

disaster in support of the orphaned children. Samuel has served on the Board of the Joint Council on International Children Services promoting the adoption of international children. They volunteer and dedicate their time to supporting adoption and are domestic and international child advocates. Mr. and Mrs. Pitkowsky go above and beyond the call of duty and should be commended for their dedication and commitment as adoption advocates and parents.

Barbara Raymond

Representative Carolyn Maloney

Barbara Bisantz Raymond is an adoptive parent who reached beyond the joy of parenting to examine the impact of her daughter being denied valuable life-important information contained in her original birth certificates. For sixteen years, she investigated an egregious case of adoption fraud that ushered in the practice of sealing birth certificates for adopted children. The result is her book, "The Baby Thief: The Untold Story of Georgia Tann, the Baby Seller who Corrupted Adoption," that documents the story of Georgia Tann, who profited by arranging over 5000 adoptions between 1924 and 1950, covering her crimes by destroying their birth certificates and issuing false certificates portraying adoptive parents as having given birth to the child they adopted. This new practice caught on in other states where well-meaning legislators believed the assertion that the measure would spare adoptees the stigma of illegitimacy. Raymond's book is already causing child welfare reformers to examine outdated and potentially harmful practices in adoption. Aside from researching her book, she has worked tirelessly to champion opening adoption records and to initiate adoption legal reform.

Randy Sheinberg and Martin Cohen

Representative Gary Ackerman

Described as "their most precious gift", Rabbi Randy Sheinberg and her husband Martin Cohen adopted their daughter, Paola, from Guatemala in late 2006. Ever since her first trip to Guatemala several years ago, the Rabbi had felt drawn back to that country. With a good adoption system in place, the Rabbi and her husband believed it was right to bring Paola into their home and open the world to her. The process wasn't easy. During the

adoption proceedings, the Rabbi and her husband had to overcome problems with both the U.S. Embassy and with the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service. Fortunately, with the intervention of the Congressman's office, the paperwork was finally acknowledged and Paola received her visa in October. Now fifteen-months old, Paola is described as a happy child, full of life and bringing lots of joy to the parents who believe her adoption is a real blessing.

Thomas Suozzi

Representative Carolyn McCarthy

Nassau County Executive Suozzi entered public service because of his desire to help the most vulnerable citizens in our society. In the midst of solving a budget crisis and turning Nassau County's finances around, Suozzi has significant experiences assisting those in need during his five years as an elected official. In May 2005, County Executive Suozzi launched Common Sense for the Common Good, which earmarks \$1 million dollars a year for three years to reduce abortions in Nassau County and support women who become unintentionally pregnant. Common Sense for the Common Good takes a multi-faceted approach to reducing the number of abortions by promoting adoptions, providing housing for single mothers who choose to give birth, and by preventing unintended pregnancies in the first place. Common Sense for the Common Good puts rhetoric aside. Suozzi succeeded in uniting groups as diverse as Planned Parenthood and Catholic Charities to work together on Common Sense for the Common Good. All of the participants in the process were reminded of the importance of respecting the other participants and keeping the focus on the common ground they all shared, regardless of their diverse ideological views. No one was asked to compromise their values. While divided on some basic core issues, these groups have pledged to work together to reduce the number of abortions in Nassau County. In order to further his objective, Suozzi appointed a task force and divided it into three groups by focus area: prevention, housing, and adoption. The task force developed a request for proposals to select groups to carry out these services. Throughout the process, Suozzi emphasized that all of the people involved were working towards a common goal regardless of ideology. A request for

proposals for Common Sense for the Common Good was issued in early December 2005 and the grant awards were announced in February 2006. Seven individual contracts were submitted to the Nassau County legislature in April 2006 as part of one single initiative, and the contracts gained approval in November 2006. After careful development of the program, implementation of Common Sense for the Common Good began in December 2006. This program was expected to take a few months to implement, but took more than a year. The process was far from easy, but due to Suozzi's vision and strong commitment to the initiative, the program was successfully launched and thousands of lives are being positively affected. As part of the adoption component of Common Sense, \$83,000 was awarded to Spence-Chapin Services to Families and Children to train Nassau County healthcare and social service professionals in adoption procedures, and \$97,000 was awarded to Schneider's Children's Hospital/Long Island Jewish Medical Center in partnership with the Adoption Annex to provide access to information about adoption to families and healthcare and social services professionals. The purpose of these programs is to enhance and increase the number of adoptions in Nassau County. The adoption component of the program focuses on increasing community and professional awareness regarding the adoption option for women facing unplanned pregnancies and for couples interested in this option as a way to build their families. To foster adoption education in Nassau County, a goal is to develop a Nassau County information, referral, and resource center regarding adoption and adoption-related services, including web-based information. The program also aims to provide post-adoptive individual, family, and group services for County residents, which free medical consults with a physician with expertise in the needs of adoptees. Nassau County is already starting to realize successes in adoption programs under Suozzi's leadership. Spence Chapin Services for Families and Children has trained 293 health, mental health, and education professionals in 30 separate workshops on counseling people on adoption. The North Shore Long Island Jewish Health System and Adoption Annex has established the Adoption Information, Education, and Support Center. The Center has served 76 individ-

uals in groups and several clients have received individual counseling. A website will go live in late summer 2007. Common Sense for the Common Good has worked so well in Nassau County that it is County Executive Suozzi's hope that other communities can replicate this program in a unified effort to improve the lives of other young people. The program has been recognized on a national level. EJ Dionne, Jr. of the Washington Post stated in a May 17, 2005 opinion piece, Suozzi "just might move the national abortion debate to more constructive ground". Suozzi has converted the same energy and passion that fuels rhetoric on the issue into a common effort. Suozzi recognizes that people who want to adopt need the County's assistance. Adoption programs have already been successful in educating knowledgeable professionals who will assist people interested in adoption in a compassionate way. Suozzi does not want women who seek information about adoption to face more bureaucracy and expense. By educating people on the adoption process, County Executive Suozzi will pave the path for children in need to be adopted into loving families.

NORTH CAROLINA

David and Lisa Holbrook

Representative Howard Coble

Caroline's Promise is a Christian non-profit organization with a three-fold mission: 1. educating the community about adoption; 2. providing guidance and assistance to couples through the adoption process by providing education, resources, financial assistance and prayer support; and 3. meeting the physical and spiritual needs of children throughout the world with the hope that those children will thrive on Christian love. Everyone in the Caroline's Promise organization is a volunteer. Caroline's Promise began in August of 2003, because the founders, David and Lisa Holbrook, were willing to wonder how many other people would adopt if they could be helped financially. As the Holbrooks began this thought process, they felt a spiritual calling to help others by starting what would become Caroline's Promise. Caroline's Promise has seen many accomplishments in the relatively short period of its existence. Since the first organizational meeting in August of 2003, the ministry has grown in many different ways.

Through speaking engagements, charity fairs and adoption conferences, the ministry has been able to educate North Carolinians about the needs of orphans in the US and abroad. The Caroline's Promise Children's Choir, made up of adoptees and their siblings, performs at area events and portrays a beautiful picture of forever families. Caroline's Promise has provided \$3000 grants to eleven North Carolina families, allowing children from Korea, China, Guatemala, Ethiopia, Liberia and Kyrgyzstan to come home to their forever families. Through their mission projects the ministry has been able to take teams to Guyana, South America and Guatemala. These trips provide North Carolinians a wonderful opportunity to minister to orphans, deliver humanitarian aid, and assist in the construction of children's homes. As the ministry grows, Caroline's Promise hopes to share the needs of orphans throughout North Carolina and encourage individuals and churches to use their unique gifts to meet those needs.

Van and Tamara Nance

Representative Patrick McHenry

Because of his uncle and aunt's willingness to take in Van and his siblings after his mother passed away in his youth, Van suggested fostering as a way to expand on the family that Tamara and he already had. Both Van and Tamara come from large families and consider children to be unique, valuable, and worthy of love. As Christians, Van and Tamara want to follow the example Jesus set to love children. They also take seriously His admonition that children should not be harmed. Van and Tamara's decision to foster and then adopt is a result of a lifelong process of valuing family and loving children. Tamara and Van acknowledge that there are many unknowns going into fostering. The child, though, is not responsible for the problems that may arise as a result of choices made by others. Each time the Nance family accepted another child into their family, they had to experience many difficult issues including medical complications. At the end of each day, no matter how chaotic, Tamara and Van believe that each child is a gift to them from God. They love them all just the same and treasure the opportunities that have come from both the trials and the triumphs.

NORTH DAKOTA

Greg and Jenn Knopp

Representative Earl Pomeroy

Greg and Jenn Knopp have devoted their lives to helping those in need. The Knopps have provided foster care for numerous children in North Dakota and have adopted Josiah and Isaac through Adults Adopting Special Kids (AASK), North Dakota's special needs adoption program. Josiah and Isaac, each of whom have significant medical needs, have made enormous strides in every area of development due to Greg and Jenn's unfailing love and commitment to helping them achieve their potential. Adoptive advocates who work closely with the Knopps say that they have, "an incredible warmth of spirit" and have gone, "above and beyond the medical needs for their children." Additionally, the Knopps have opened their hearts and homes to Isaac and Josiah's birth families. The Knopps truly understand the lifelong connection that they share with their sons' birth families and will honor that connection in the years to come. The Knopps are North Dakota's 2006 Special Needs Adoptive Family of the Year and have committed themselves to being the best parents they can be to provide their sons with the unconditional love, support, encouragement and forever family that every child deserves. I am pleased to nominate Greg and Jen Knopp as Angels in Adoption.

James and Danette Laske

Senator Kent Conrad and Senator Byron Dorgan

Just ask Jim and Danette Laske how adoption has impacted their lives and you will get an earful of life stories, a dose of spiritual reflection and two very big smiles, as they talk about just how busy they are these days. The Laske's adopted their 5th child on National Adoption Day (Nov. 18th) last year. The Laske's, from Fargo, have been married for 24 years. Jim is employed as an Accounting Manager for Dakota Carrier Network, a North Dakota fiber optics company. Danette is a stay-at-home mother and homemaker, who "temporarily" left behind her career as a registered nurse over thirteen years ago. All five of the Laske children came to them through the loving gift of adoption. Madalyn, the oldest, is 15 years old and a sophomore at Shanley High School in Fargo. Joseph is 13

years old and a 7th grader at Sullivan Middle School. Grace, 8 years old, is in the 2nd grade at Nativity Elementary School. The two youngest children, Hannah and Joshua, are 2 years old and 1 year old, respectively. All of the children were placed into the Laske home as infants, ranging from 1 week old to 5 months old. And how does one couple end up adopting 5 children? "Well, we sure didn't think that we would be so blessed when we first started down the adoption path about 20 years ago." reflects Jim, "Like many people, we were just praying and waiting and hoping for one child! Through faith and patience, we just simply tried to be open to whatever was, or wasn't, in store for us. And now, here we are, five precious children later!" "Each one has their own story and own set of circumstances," says Danette, in reference to her children, "but they all are taught the beauty of adoption from the time they enter our family. We teach them that ALL children come from God, and that they themselves were all meant to be sister and brother to each other, and daughter and son to us." Jim and Danette have a strong belief in the sanctity of life and feel adoption is a powerful tool in the affirmation of life itself. They feel birthparents that choose adoption should be supported in a caring, non-judgmental way. "We all need help at times, and it is a very difficult, but very loving act when parents set aside their own needs for the greater needs of a child. With the profound power of adoption, it's never too late to heal a child, or to heal a birthparent or to heal an adoptive parent!" exhort the couple, "We are living proof of that!"

OHIO

Rhonda Abban

Senator George Voinovich

Rhonda Abban has more than 29 years in public administrative program experience with children and family service organizations. She is currently the Adoption Section Chief for the Office of Children and Families within the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). She has been employed with ODJFS from 1995 to present. Her prior work included child advocacy with the first minority Adoption Outreach Program through Franklin County Children Services, formerly called the Black Family Connection Program. Under her

reign and administrative leadership, for seven years she helped to promote the adoption of over 1000 special needs and minority children. This was a grassroots program, and she was able to shift past casework practices that impeded the adoption of older minority children, and sibling groups who needed a permanent home. Prior to that time, she served as a social worker with Franklin County Children Services Adoptions Department from 1983 through 1995. Mrs. Abban is a devoted mother of three children, and married to Emmanuel Abban. Her experiences in adoption are from both a personal and professional perspective. Mrs. Abban has dedicated her entire life and career advocating for children to have a safe and permanent home. Within her current policymaking roles, she has played an integral role in assisting in developing and implementing child welfare reform legislation. Mrs. Abban met with various stakeholders from all over Ohio to help build the bridge in creating positive change for Ohio's children awaiting permanent homes, while strongly advocating for the protection of those children who are already placed with adoptive families. Currently, Mrs. Abban continues to improve the lives of children through her legislative interests. She strongly promotes adoptive families rights to negotiate with public child welfare agencies for financial subsidy supports and to eliminate any fiscal barriers to support an adoptive placement. In addition, during 2007, she looks forward to working with other statewide and national partners regarding the Hague Convention, to create standardization and state policies regarding the increased trend of international/intercountry adoptions. Finally, Mrs. Abban is highly regarded in the field of adoptions. She is known both on a national and state level for her contributions to the field.

Helen Brown

Representative Marcy Kaptur

Ms. Marjory Turner writes, "...At the age of 76 (when most people retire) my pastor Dr. Helen L. Brown took on the task of raising a rejected and heartbroken teenager. Dr. Brown has been a mother, friend, chastener, counselor, and spiritual leader to me. She has not only taken me under her wings but she has also taken over thirty other youth under her wings and into her home over the last fifty years. It has been three years and she is still in

my corner. To some this may seem minute but to me this has been the longest sense of stability I have ever experienced. As a result I would like to nominate her for the Angels in Adoption Award and I hope you will find her love and actions as commendable as I do..." Indeed I do, and am honored to nominate Dr. Helen Brown as an Angel in Adoption 2007.

Susan Garner Eisenman

Representative Deborah Pryce

Susan Eisenman has devoted the last 30 years of her law practice to the area of adoption law as well as providing public and professional education on adoption issues. She is a founder of Resolve Ohio and New Roots Adoptive Families Support Group, and has an extraordinary reputation throughout Ohio as both an adoption law attorney and adoption advocate. In addition to her personal law practice, Ms. Eisenman has devoted countless hours as appointed counsel or guardian ad litem for indigent people and minors before our Franklin County Juvenile Court. She has mentored law students, worked pro-bono in an interfaith clinic providing counsel to those in need and professional education seminars for social workers and attorneys. At the national level, Ms. Eisenman is a charter member of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys and has served on numerous AAAA committees over the course of the past 17 years. She has been active in linking AAAA with the North American Council for Adoptable Children which focuses on the needs of waiting children. She is the recipient of the 2007 Silberberg Award for public service from the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys.

Harold and Diane Keesee

Representative Zack Space

Diane and Harold Keesee are living angels in the hearts of the many children whose lives they have touched. The couple makes their home in Uhrichsville, Ohio, a home still open to children in foster care after nearly thirty-three years dedicated to that cause. Harold is a retired Presbyterian minister yet he still services a small church with a congregation of twelve members. The Keesees began their service as foster parents in Virginia and have been licensed in Ohio for the last 17 years in both Guernsey and Tuscarawas Counties. Their son is

currently in his junior year of high school. Diane and Harold do not foster many children at one time. They feel the children are better served when they are able to give undivided attention to the children in their home. They vow to always keep an open mind and are dedicated to the cause of making a difference in the lives of the children they welcome into their home. The couple feels they still have a lot to offer despite their many years, and Diane sums it up best by stating, "You either have it or you don't" indicating that only the loss of the ability or spirit to inspire should stop anyone from working to make a difference.

Vanita Oelschlager

Senator Sherrod Brown

Vanita Oelschlager's efforts have positively affected the lives of children in Summit County, Ohio and from countries around the world. While Vanita has participated for years in generous philanthropy and community involvement, Vanita (along with her husband, Jim) took a personal interest in establishing a resource for potential adoptive parents in the Greater Akron area, following the complications surrounding the adoption of her granddaughter Vi-Yen. Adopted from a Chinese orphanage, Vi-Yen's adoptive mother (Vanita's daughter) had a difficult time finding a doctor able and willing to provide her with an evaluation and the treatment needed during her transition from a Chinese orphanage to a supportive American home. Like many overseas adoptees, her granddaughter had not received the health care many of us have taken for granted. Children adopted from orphanages are at high risk for conditions such as chronic hepatitis, anemia, AIDS, congenital infections, failure to thrive, developmental delays and psychological traumas. Thankfully, Vi-Yen is now healthy and a happy addition to the family. Vanita became very aware of the need to provide adoptive children with an array of support services. Too often, adults willing to adopt find themselves in a variety of bureaucratic mazes that are costly and emotionally exhausting. It's a tribute to adoptive parents that they persevere and succeed, however Vanita believed it did not need to be so difficult. Keeping to her belief that "if we each helped in the area where we live, this would be a better world," Vi Yen's experience spurred Vanita and her husband to make a \$2 million

donation to Akron Children's Hospital in June 2004 to establish the Oak Adoptive Health Center. I have had the privilege to work with Vanita to make her vision of a dedicated multi-disciplinary staff that prepares and educates families involved in domestic, international and special needs adoptions a reality. The Oak Adoptive Health Center provides medical, developmental evaluations psychological treatment as well as connects families with the resources to help ensure that no adoptive family in Northeast Ohio will experience the difficulties faced by Vanita's daughter. Since opening its doors in 2005, the center has made a difference in the lives of several hundred children and their adoptive families. Oak Families represent children adopted from eight Ohio counties, three states, and eight countries.

Ashley John and Janell Parker

Representative Pat Tiberi

Ashley John and Janell Parker made the admirable decision to complete their family through adoption. The Parkers began the adoption process in 2005 and stayed strong while experiencing many of the challenges that can come with a private adoption. However, in 2007, they were able to complete their family, when Corey began sharing their loving home. Ashley and Janell are genuinely wonderful and giving people. They have maintained an open relationship with Corey's biological mother, making sure they keep her well-versed in their son's activities and development and showing compassion and appreciation for the gift she has given them. The impact that they had on her is astounding. She has stated, "I sometimes lay awake thinking they are angels sent from heaven!" The Parker's are active in their faith and attend Dublin Baptist Church in Dublin, Ohio. They volunteered to provide guidance to other couples as they take on the journey of adoption through the "Someone to Talk to List" created by the office that completed their adoption. Most importantly, they have agreed to provide a caring, joyful, and stable home for their son Corey. The Parker's hope to expand their family by adopting two more children in the future.

Michael Voorhees

Representative Jean Schmidt

In 1996, Michael Voorhees left a lucrative

career practicing corporate law to dedicate his time and energy to all aspects of adoption law. Since that time, Michael has touched the lives of countless families. He has worked on more than 1,000 adoption cases and contributed greatly to the adoption community in the state of Ohio. Through his work on various boards, including the Ohio Adoption Law Roundtable and others, and his many speaking engagements, Michael is a leading advocate for birth parents, adoptive parents and especially the children involved. He was recently recognized for his commitment and leadership as a recipient of the President's Award for the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys. Michael maintains contact with many of the families he has worked with and enjoys getting updates about the children he has helped over the years. He is truly making a difference in the lives of so many. It is my honor to nominate Michael Voorhees as the 2007 Angel in Adoption recipient from Ohio's Second Congressional district.

O K L A H O M A

Steve and Lana Freeman

Senator James Inhofe

Steve and Lana Freeman have been involved in adoption and foster care for over 20 years, working to ensure that children have safe and stable families. They have six adopted children—all of whom they fostered prior to their adoptions—as well as two biological children. The Freeman's truly feel called to be involved in adoption, a passion they have shared since they began dating in high school. Since 1984, the Freeman's have fostered over 200 children. Lana has shown her true dedication to the adoption cause by working with several organizations including: the National Foster Family Association, the Foster Care Association of Oklahoma, the National Foster Parent Association, and the Post Adjudicated Review Board. Lana helped raise awareness of the over 12,000 children in foster care in Oklahoma by serving as coordinator of the Doll Project. Through this project, she collected "foster dolls" from donors across the state to represent the thousands of children in Oklahoma's foster care system. The dolls were loaned to Governor Brad Henry, Lt. Governor Jari Askins, and every member of the Oklahoma State Legislature for several months so that these law-

makers could experience being a foster parent. The dolls were later "adopted" by their "foster parents" and donors. They will be displayed next year at the Oklahoma Pathway Conference to continue to draw attention to the issue. The Freeman's say their motivation to be involved in adoption and foster care comes from simply seeing the impact they have made in the lives of so many children. It is their hope that one day every child in foster care will have an equal opportunity to succeed in life. Because of their service, unrelenting dedication, and passion for helping children, I am proud to honor Steve and Lana Freeman as my 2007 Angels in Adoption.

Dierdre McCool

Senator Tom Coburn

Dierdre McCool has been involved in the field of adoption for over 11 years, working extensively with all members of the adoption triad. She is highly committed to educating adoptive families about the unique blessings and challenges of raising children of adoption and is active in educating the public about the importance of empowering women in unintended pregnancies with knowledge about this amazing option. Mrs. McCool is currently serving as President of the Oklahoma Adoption Coalition. Dierdre also served as Lead master Trainer for the Infant Adoption Awareness Training Program from 2002-2005, receiving the honor as top-trainer nationwide. She is a member of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services Recruitment Committee. Mrs. McCool has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology from the University of Central Oklahoma and a Masters in Marital and Family Therapy from Southern Nazarene University. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor.

Jenni and David White

Representative Mary Fallin

David and Jennifer White were married in 1997 in Oklahoma City after dating nearly 10 years. David has his Master's Degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Oklahoma and is currently a computer software designer and programmer with a Norman, Oklahoma firm, Power Costs Incorporated. Jennifer has her Master's Degree in Biology from the University of Central Oklahoma. After teaching in the Oklahoma City

Public School System for several years, she 'retired' to become a stay-at-home mom and care for their first child together, Coleman Russell who was born in June of 2002. Jennifer's daughter from a previous marriage, Bryna Casey Shackelford, now 23, lives on her own and attends the University of Central Oklahoma where she majors in Journalism. She is an excellent big sister and a fabulous babysitter to her siblings! In August of 2003, David and Jennifer's second child, Marshall Hudson, was stillborn at 23 weeks. In December of 2004, their third child, Samuel Hudson was born. July of 2005, while visiting Jennifer's grandfather, the couple met the Zambian woman, Justina, Jennifer's cousin Brad had married while teaching in Zambia. That May, Justina had lost her only full sister, Mary, to a diabetic coma. Justina was very concerned because the youngest of the seven children orphaned by her death (the father was never a true part of the household) were girls ages 3 and 8 years. Young girls in African countries can be in grave danger from rape by AIDS-infected men observing the old wives' tale that having sex with a virgin can cure them of their disease. Not only were the children too young to care for themselves, their safety was an issue. Adoption of the girls was offered at that point, but because Brad and Justina were both teaching in the country, Justina felt that she could adequately keep an eye on the girls and care for them at that time. By the next year, Brad's contract had not been renewed and both he and Justina were forced to leave the country to find work, leaving the girls supervised only by their older brothers who both worked and went to school. It was then that Justina began to believe that adoption was not only their best, but probably their only option to thrive. Adoption proceedings were begun in June of 2006 and though the Zambian part of the process was much more difficult than it should have been, Betty Nzali White (now 5 1/2) and Barbara Chilekwa White (now 10) joined the White family in Oklahoma City in May of this year. To date, both girls are in elementary school; Betty in kindergarten with her brother, Coleman, and Barbara in 4th grade. Both are learning well and working hard and enjoying life in the United States and with their new family and siblings.

O R E G O N

Mike and Teri Franell

Representative Greg Walden

Mike and Teri Franell have a strong sense of the importance of family and a commitment to helping others. With three birth children of their own, they have chosen to expand their family through the adoption of two sibling groups from Oregon's foster care system. In 2000, the Franells adopted three siblings, Devin, Cheyenne, and Darrion. Shortly after the children were placed with them, Cheyenne was diagnosed with leukemia. The Franells were given the option to back out of the adoption, but they decided that the best way to show the love of a family was to keep the children together. Two years later Cheyenne passed away at age five. Despite this heartbreak, in 2005 the Franells decided they wanted to adopt another child or sibling pair again. However, they were drawn to a sibling group of four children, whom they soon learned had a fifth sibling that were divided up among three foster homes. The Franells were selected for the children, and all five were placed in their home in 2006. They are now finalizing the adoption of the five siblings. In addition, the Franells are also providing foster care for additional children in their home. Because of their warmth and compassion, not only have they influenced the lives of their foster children, they have become a permanent family in the lives of eight children who otherwise might not have had a place to call home.

Jeannie Jin-Hyang Hong

Senator Gordon Smith

I am proud to select Ms. Jeannie Jin-Hyang Hong as an "Angel in Adoption." Jeannie has been a powerful and unwavering advocate for adoption for more than a decade. As Manager of the Overseas Korean's Foundation, Jeannie has used her position to promote programs and activities that directly impact adoptees. She led the effort in Korea to support adult adoptee activities in Korea, Europe, and the United States, and is responsible for assisting in the emergence of the global community of Korean adult adoptees. Ms. Hong has encouraged the Korean government to initiate a number of programs to support the connection of

adoptive families to the culture and heritage of their birth country. Each summer, Jeannie coordinates summer cultural programs for Korean adoptees and has literally worked with hundreds of adoptees sound the world through the Overseas Korean's Foundation. Jeannie is well known and respected throughout the international adult adoptee community. She is gratefully acknowledged by adoptees for being instrumental in bridging the gap between their birth and adopted countries. Jeannie has accomplished all of this while working tirelessly and passionately on behalf of children and families who depend on her.

Jean Vanlue

Representative Darlene Hooley

Jean Vanlue began her adoption work with a small private agency where she quickly gained recognition as an astute social worker. Her commitment there to matching waiting families with waiting children in State custody led to accepting an adoption caseworker position with the Oregon Department of Human Services. Families appreciated her forthrightness in sharing her own insights and mistakes as an adoptive mom when illustrative to the situation at hand. Desiring to further her skills, Jean earned a Master's degree in Marriage & Family Therapy and then a Post-Graduate Certificate in Therapy with Adoptive Families. She opened a private counseling practice in 2003 that utilizes an-income based fee scale in order to provide services to a broader client base. Most importantly to her, Jean and her husband are the proud and grateful adoptive parents of six children. Jean has a deep passion for raising awareness among adoptive parents of the need to honor all aspects of their children, including their birth heritage. Jean teaches "Adoption Issues throughout Life" to parents, presents trainings on adoption to DHS staff, and has written a children's adoption preparation workbook called "Looking Back, Looking Forward". Jean is known for her gentle yet incisive approach and her ability to guide families in identifying and building upon their own strengths.

Robert Whelan

Representative Earl Blumenauer

It is my honor to nominate Robert Whelan for the 2007 Angels in Adoption Award. Brought to my attention by the staff of the Oregon Post Adoption Resource center, Robert has overcome the odds to form a cohesive family unit. Adoption staff describe Robert as "one of the most committed, persevering, and positive adoptive parents the social workers in our state have ever had the pleasure of knowing and working with." As a single professional, Robert forged through the DHS bureaucracy to adopt and raise two older boys who had spent several years in the foster care system. Jordan came to live with Robert at age nine, and several years later Thomas came to join the family at age 14. When a caseworker approached Robert about Thomas' need for a home, Robert consulted with Jordan and the choice to adopt Thomas was a true family decision. Both Jordan and Thomas, now ages nineteen and twenty, are successful college students and have developed a close brotherly relationship. Robert has provided both his sons with security, stability, loving extended family, and stimulating cultural and intellectual pursuits. Under his guidance, Jordan and Thomas have overcome the deprivations of early childhood to develop their academic potential. In his gentle and encouraging manner, Robert taught his sons self-respect and perseverance and gave them the encouragement and confidence to pursue their higher education goals. Not content to limit his concern to his own immediate family, Robert drew upon his professional background as a senior economist to write a groundbreaking report on the cost of methamphetamine addiction on the residents of the Portland metropolitan area. He calculated the cost to the general public, dubbing it the "hidden meth tax" on society. In his bio accompanying the published report, he noted that his interest was in part spurred by meth being the cause of the dissolution of the birth family on one of his sons, as well as a too common factor in the lives of Oregon's foster and adopted children. I am proud to have Robert Whelan as an adoptive parent in Oregon. The family that he, Jordan and Thomas have become are a true testament to the success that can occur when an individual opens his heart to a child and accepts the challenge of adopting.

P E N N S Y L V A N I A

Sue and Hector Badeau

Senator Robert Casey and Representative Chaka Fattah

Hector and Susan Badeau, are the parents of twenty-two children, two by birth and twenty adopted. They have also served as foster parents for more than 50 children in three states, and as a host family for refugee youth from Sudan, Kosovo and Guatemala. They are now actively involved in the lives of their 30 grandchildren, as well as continuing to care for the 7 children still at home. They have won numerous awards for their work, including being recognized by President Clinton with an "Adoption Excellence" award for their work on behalf of adoption and children in foster care in 1997. Susan Badeau has been a child welfare professional for twenty-eight years. Currently the Executive Director of the Philadelphia Children's Commission, a member of the Pennsylvania Governor's Commission on Children and a policy consultant, from 2002 – 2006 Ms. Badeau served as the Deputy Director of the Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care. She has also worked in direct services at both the casework and supervisory levels in adoption and foster care in both public and private agencies. She has developed curricula on many topics used to prepare professional child welfare staff, adoptive and foster parents, judges, attorneys and youth. She also writes extensively on topics related to children, particularly those with special needs. A lifelong child advocate, she completed a one-year Kennedy Public Policy Fellowship in the office of Senator John D (Jay) Rockefeller IV. Active in community efforts on behalf of children and families with special needs at many levels, Sue has served Pennsylvania as the Chairperson of the Pennsylvania Statewide Adoption Network Advisory Council, as a member of the Philadelphia Health Department's Special Needs Work Group and in other roles. She has also been a Sunday school teacher and volunteer at her children's elementary schools. Hector has been the "captain" of the home front for over 25 years. Besides raising the Badeau children, he is often called upon to look out for neighborhood children, and has provided numerous hours of informal counseling, in person and by phone, to children,

teens and their parents who are going through a variety of challenges with life. Hector was once designated as one of the local "Father of the Year" Father's Day candidates by the Philadelphia Inquirer.

Michaelina Bendig

Representative Jim Gerlach

Children are the mainstay of Michaelina Bendig's personal and professional life. For the last 15 years she has been an adoption consultant at Adoptions From The Heart (AFTH), a licensed, non-profit agency based in Wynnewood, Pa., offering domestic and international adoptions. A former elementary school teacher, she is also the mother of three adopted teenage daughters (one internationally, two domestically through an open adoption). Having seen the strengths and weaknesses of the adoption process based on her own personal experiences, Michaelina became an adoption professional so that she could help prospective adoptive parents understand all the options available to them and learn from her mistakes. Michaelina works closely with birth parents to place children with adoptive families, in an open adoption (allowing birth parents to choose the family they wish to raise their child, and maintain varying levels of communication throughout the child's life). Throughout her career, she has maintained close friendships with birth parents she has counseled, and believes she is extremely fortunate to have a career that is so rewarding on both levels – professionally and personally – with her own ties to adoption. In addition to Michaelina's work with birth parents and adoptive families, she is a frequent speaker for AFTH, and presents at local conferences and educational seminars about domestic and open adoption. "Michaelina's genuine passion for children and families, and her absolute commitment to improving the field of adoption make her truly deserving of the Congressional 2007 Angel in Adoption honor," said Maxine Chalker, MSW, LSW, founder and executive director of AFTH.

Steven G. Dubin

Representative Patrick Murphy

For more than 20 years, Steven G. Dubin has been involved with adoption and adoption-related law. Through this practice, he has done more than establish a career, he has created families. Along with his wife Marci, Steven has been involved with

the placement of hundreds of children. His office has handled some tough and unusual cases, but Steven has always remained true to his firm's philosophy and mission. People who never thought they would be parents are parents today because of the work his office has done.

Betty Foo

Senator Arlen Specter

Betty Foo moved to America from China as a young woman. She and her husband, Dr. ENi Foo, own and manage an educational consulting firm, Asia Learning, which promotes cultural exchange programs between China and the United States. They are the proprietors of Hunan, a Chinese restaurant in the suburbs of Philadelphia. In addition, Mrs. Foo teaches Chinese language and culture classes to children in the local school districts. Mrs. Foo was a founding partner and principal at the Main Line Chinese School for Chinese-American families. After China began allowing international adoptions in the 1990s, Mrs. Foo founded the Ding Hao Chinese School as an offshoot of the Main Line Chinese School. The majority of Ding Hao students are children adopted from China and whose families are not fluent in Chinese. Since its inception in 1997, the school has grown to include more than 150 students who range in age from 3 to 15 years old. The school's mission is to promote an understanding of the Chinese heritage, language and culture and to foster a sense of pride in that heritage. After-school programs include dance, Chinese music lessons, and tai chi. Through her efforts, Mrs. Foo has helped ease the adoption process for many families who adoption children from China. She served for some ten years on the Advisory Board of Families with Children from China. She continues to serve on the Boards for the American Association of Ethnic Chinese and the Chinese Association of Greater Philadelphia. Each summer she helps visiting Chinese college students acclimate to the Philadelphia area and American culture.

Pinebrook Services for Children and Youth

Representative Charles Dent

On behalf of Pennsylvania's 15th District, it is my honor to name Pinebrook Services for Children and Youth, a non-profit agency which, for 28

years, has been dedicated to adoption and foster services for special-needs children throughout our area. These services cover a broad range of challenges from diagnosis and treatment to placement and education for children and families who are immeasurably strengthened by Pinebrook's existence in their lives. Currently led by Executive Director Robert M. Jacobs and an excellent, effective staff, Pinebrook Services has been built on the vision of two extraordinary women — Florence Applebaum, principal founder and first Executive Director, and Nancy Center, successive Executive Director for 12 of her 23 years of service to Pinebrook. Sadly, Nancy Center was lost to us last year, so it is in particular tribute to her memory — and to Florence's continuing impact on Pinebrook — that we recognize their defining and driving force behind Pinebrook's mission. The mission of Pinebrook Services for Children and Youth, as visionary leaders in children's services, is to promote the well-being and self-sufficiency of children and their families and strengthen our communities through prevention, intervention, and advocacy. A permanent and loving home for every child is at the core of Pinebrook's mission. We believe that every child deserves a family who can provide security, nurture and a commitment to parenting, whether the adoption is domestic, international, or a case with "special needs." Pinebrook's special-needs children may be 5 years or older; a member of a sibling group; a member of a minority group; have physical, mental or emotional disability; or tend to develop disabilities due to genetic or environmental factors. Many of those children were victims of abuse from their birth parents; some have been languishing in foster homes. Pinebrook's continuum of adoption services begins with a carefully prepared Child and Family Profile, which matches a child with the adoptive parents' history, home life and strengths. Training, casework and supervision occur throughout the process to ensure stability and bonding. Post-adoption services include in-home respite care for special-needs children. By giving adoptive parents a much needed break, in-home respite care helps stabilize the bonding process. Pinebrook's Adoption Services program has successfully finalized 40 adoptions in the past three years. The agency is affiliated with Pennsylvania's Statewide Adoption Network (SWAN).

Kelly Robinson Ulonska

Representative Mike Doyle

Many times, when we think of honoring special people in adoption, our thoughts turn to adoptive parents, adoptees, foster parents or adoption professionals. We frequently leave out the birthparents that have been ignored for so long. Without the wisdom, love and strength of the birthparents that make this extremely difficult decision, there would be no such thing as adoption. Kelly Robinson lovingly placed her child for adoption 15 years ago through The Children's Home of Pittsburgh when she realized that her child deserved more than what she could provide for her at that time in her life. Having grown up in a single parent home herself, Kelly knew she wanted her child to be raised in a traditional home with a family who would cherish and adore her daughter while meeting all of her needs. With this in mind, Kelly decided on an open adoption through The Children's Home of Pittsburgh where she could choose her daughter's parents, keep in touch with them and possibly be part of her daughter's life someday. Kelly described giving her daughter Kiersten to someone else as the hardest, most gut wrenching thing she had ever done, feeling as if she would never get her heart back. She knew she made the right decision after getting the first set of letters and pictures from Khris and Tom Jungling, the parents she chose for her daughter. She could see how happy and healthy her daughter was and felt confident that she had chosen the best parents in the world for her. The Junglings, Kiersten and Kelly have developed a wonderful relationship over the years that is based on trust and commitment. Because of Kelly's decision to place her child for adoption and to have an open adoption, Kiersten has all of her questions about her adoption answered whenever she needs or wants to know. She also has the privilege of experiencing love and caring from two families. The highlight of this relationship was when Kiersten was a bridesmaid in her birthmother's wedding about one year ago. Besides the selfless decision of placing her daughter for adoption and maintaining a relationship with her over the years, Kelly has spent countless hours of her time volunteering at the Children's Home by educating and supporting other birthparents. She talks to prospective adoptive parents, board members, foundations and is

always available at a moment's notice to help in any way she can. Kelly is truly an Angel in Adoption and deserves to be recognized for her dedication to her daughter, her adoptive family and anyone who is touched by adoption. May she be a model for future birthparents that make this loving, self sacrificial decision to place their child for adoption. Kelly's example should lead the way in helping birthparents to receive the recognition and status that they deserve, but have been denied for so long.

P U E R T O R I C O

Fundacion Pro-Ayuda Puerto Rico

Representative Luis Fortuno

Fundación Pro Ayuda de Puerto Rico (Puerto Rican Assistance Foundation). Founded in 1983, the Foundation was created to provide a place for young children, abused and sometimes abandoned, to live while the process of adoption was finalized. For these purposes the Foundation established a center for these children to live in while a temporary home was found. The Foundation has over the years developed a strong relationship with government agencies to make the transition and the search for adoptive parents easier on the children. Their efforts have focused lately on lobbying the local legislature, changing laws and administrative procedures to speed up the adoption process. All parties involved in these processes now take advantage of the organizations structures and programs to best serve the children in need.

R H O D E I S L A N D

David and Jennifer Preston

Senator Jack Reed

As parents of two children who were adopted both internationally and domestically, David and Jennifer "Jen" Preston of East Greenwich, RI have been active in the adoption arena for the past ten years, most recently through their volunteer efforts with Adoption Rhode Island. David, a graduate of Providence College and Suffolk University Law School, and founder of the communications and government relations agency New Harbor Group, has used his vast contacts in both the public and private sectors to forward the cause of adoption.

Jen, a Villanova University graduate and public relations and advertising executive, has brought her extensive expertise in marketing and fund raising to the Adoption Rhode Island Board of Directors. David and Jennifer have been strong advocates of the organization's mission to facilitate the permanent placement of children waiting in state care and to promote adoption as a positive way to create a family. Adoption Rhode Island provides services to adoptive families, advocates for public policy, works hard to find permanent families for children in state care, and increases public awareness of the unmet needs of these children. Jen likes to say that they work to find "forever families" for the kids. Additionally, this year they and the Board have been very active in their opposition to state funding cutbacks for young adults between the ages of 18 and 21 who are in state care. With other Board members, Jen will be developing a new strategic plan over the fall to find ways for the organization to further address these issues, and to increase and improve state services. David and Jen have successfully hosted a number of fundraising events for Adoption RI, the most recent of which tripled the organization's previous best. Most notable is last year's open house-fundraiser hosted by David and Jen for New Harbor clients and friends which raised enough money to fund a gift card or present for every teenager in state care. They are now working on plans to integrate this concept into other school and related business settings. David and Jen know first hand the joy and happiness that can come from adoption. In describing his daughter Caroline, 10, as "a very hard worker both in school and as a soccer goalie", and son, Harry, 7, as "a kind, friendly free spirit", they hopes to insure that others can have these same wonderful experiences that adoption can provide. I am proud to recognize David and Jen Preston's fine work as parents, adoption advocates, and members of Adoption Rhode Island, and I am pleased to select them as my 2007 Angel in Adoption nominees.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Lynn C. McKain, LMSW

Representative Bob Inglis

It is with great pride that I support the nomination of Lynn McKain for an Angels in Adoption

Award. For over seventeen years Lynn has worked and lived her mission in life to make sure that all children have a safe and loving environment to grow and learn in. Lynn is a mother of three great children, two of which were adopted at birth. Lynn has been a part of the placement of over 500 children here in South Carolina. Going into the homes that have opened their hearts and their doors to give children a better life has given her the insight to fine tune her skills to separate the just for show and real loving family environments. Lynn will tell you that as a child, she learned what it truly means to give back to the community from her parents, who gave a lifetime of service to ensure children had safe and loving environments to live in.

John and Sally Ann Miller

Representative Joe Wilson

It is an honor for me to recognize John and Sally Ann Miller of Okatie, South Carolina as the Angels in Adoption from the Second Congressional District of South Carolina. John and Sally Ann are the proud parents of four adopted children: Anna, Natasha, Leonid, and Gianna. Anna, a domestically adopted child, was joined by siblings Natasha and Leonid whom the Millers adopted from the Ukraine in August of this year. Gianna was adopted by the Millers in September after her adoptive mother became terminally ill. John, the band leader at H.E. McCracken Middle School, and his wife Sally Ann, the choral director at McCracken, have lovingly opened their home to deserving children. Their dedication to the well-being of these four children showcases the importance of adoption.

Patrick and Marchie Thornton

Senator Jim DeMint

A couple years ago, Patrick and Marchie Thornton began the process of adopting a little girl from Russia. After traveling to Russia twice, they brought Anna Vera home to South Carolina in 2005. While this was their first time navigating the international adoption process, the Thornton's have become passionate advocates for adoption. They remain in close contact with Anna Johnson, their caseworker at The Alliance for Children, who helped them overcome the challenges of adopting. Due to their positive experience, the Thornton's serve as wonderful influences in their community and encourage parents to provide loving homes

for children in orphanages overseas. Both Patrick and Marchie speak at meetings for prospective adoptive parents, with the hope of sharing their knowledge and experience with others going through the process. Anna Vera was a welcome addition to the Thornton family and their biological son, Aaron, an 8 year old who always wanted a little sister. Patrick was adopted domestically as an infant and grew up in Texas. Marchie is a member of The Alliance for Children's South Carolina Advisory Board. The Thornton family lives in Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Renee Eggebraaten

Senator John Thune

I'm proud to designate Renee Eggebraaten from Rapid City as a nominee for the Angels in Adoption Award. Renee has worked as a social worker, pregnancy counselor, and now Branch Director at Bethany Christian Services in Rapid City, South Dakota, for 18 years. She is a dedicated advocate of adoption and recognized by the community as one that has experience, knowledge, integrity and honesty in all areas of the adoption triad. She has been a Trainer for the Infant Adoption Awareness Training Program and the Infant Adoption Training Initiative for several years teaching people how to present the adoption option to persons involved in a crisis pregnancy. In 2004 Renee was nominated by South Dakota Governor Mike Rounds to serve on the Governor's Commission on the Indian Child Welfare Act. In this capacity she helped Governor Round and the legislature, along with other commissioners, to understand the impact the changing of the ICWA law would have on children and families in the Native American community. She has been working with other adoption advocates to create a Birth Father's Registry for South Dakota in order to better assist the birth father, birth mother and child in determining legal rights. In the 18 years that Renee has worked at Bethany Christian Service, she has helped over 130 birth mothers make difficult decisions for their children's futures. She has assisted over 100 families to take the step into adoption through her honest and caring counsel. She has advocated for many more birth parents and families through education and answering questions

about the option of adoption through her career. Renee is a perfect recipient for the Angels in Adoption Award as her life revolves around helping children find their forever families. Renee is married to Kevin and they have two children, Jonathan and Sara, both adopted at birth.

Audrey Kirkpatrick

Senator Tim Johnson

Audrey Kirkpatrick has been a positive influence in the lives of birth families, adoptive parents, and adoptees over the course of the last 30 years. She was among the first social workers employed by Catholic Social Services in Rapid City, South Dakota, when she started in 1977. In her time with the agency, her helping hands and open heart have shepherded hundreds through the adoption process. It is clear that Audrey's legacy will be one of compassion and caring. Stories of Audrey's intense commitment abound. She has been available to families 24 hours a day, going so far as to venture out in the middle of the night to help a young birth mother whose car had broken down. It is not uncommon for people to come back to the agency to express their gratitude to Audrey, even years after she helped them through the adoption process. Although Audrey has reached retirement age, she continues to come in to Catholic Social Services on a part-time basis, and talks about the needs of the agency going forward. Audrey is truly an Angel in Adoption. Her contributions to the communities of western South Dakota are inestimable. In the words of one her co-workers, "I can say with confidence that the gift Audrey offered to these individuals is stronger than words can express. Dedication, alone, cannot describe it." Audrey is beyond doubt deserving of recognition for her commitment to ensuring that countless children in South Dakota have loving families and safe homes.

Steve and Laurie Liebetrau

Representative Stephanie Herseth Sandlin

Each time they open their door and their lives to children in need of an atmosphere in which to develop and thrive, Steve and Laurie Liebetrau epitomize the very spirit of Angels in Adoption. Time and again, they have demonstrated a commitment to children who are in need of a loving and nurturing family environment. The Liebetraus have

three children, all of whom were adopted. The oldest, 11-year-old Maggi Yi Ju, was adopted from China by her parents in 1997. Two years later, Steve and Laurie adopted Benjamin Hyun Suk from South Korea. Ben will celebrate his ninth birthday this fall. This past December the Liebetraus celebrated the holiday season in China. They returned home on December 29, 2006 with their little girl, Audrey Qiong Ke, who is now two-years-old. The children have plenty of room for fun and games on the family's seven acres in southeast South Dakota. There they can experience the benefits of growing up in a peaceful and safe environment dominated not by poverty and uncertainty, but by the assurance of a loving and supportive family and community. While Steve and Laurie unquestionably deserve recognition as Angels in Adoption, their greatest recognition is realized each day when they are rewarded with the unconditional love of their children.

T E N N E S S E E

Ed and Sherry Harris

Representative Jim Cooper

I am honored to nominate Ed and Sherry Harris of Mt. Juliet, Tennessee as my district's Angels in Adoption for 2007. For the past two years, the Harris family served as resource parents with a local foster care agency. In the course of two short years, they were instrumental in achieving permanency for eight children, assisting in the adoption of a sibling group of three and in the reunification of another sibling group of three with their birth parents. Ed and Sherry presently provide a loving home to a teenage mother and her daughter. In addition, they are working to prepare this young woman for independent living by supporting her in her goals to finish high school, establish her own residence, go on to college and continue raising her child. Ed and Sherry Harris are strong advocates for children in the child welfare system. Instead of depending on child welfare workers to act as liaisons between birth families of the children in their care, Ed and Sherry make efforts to cultivate relationships with birth families directly. They supervise birth parent visits, communicate frequently, and invite birth family members into their home to share meals and family activities. This family-focused support of birth families allows

foster children and their parents to maintain their dignity and sense of worth. Ed and Sherry Harris are the embodiment of what child welfare workers hope for in resource families; showing genuine concern for their children, and actively participating in their lives. Sherry is a homemaker and stay-at-home mother to their birth children, Stephen, 12; and Nicole, 14; as well as their foster daughter, Gabrielle, 17; and their foster granddaughter, Jasmine, 1. Ed works as an applications administrator. The Harris' also have one adult birth son, John.

Katie Beth and Patrick McCarthy

Representative Marsha Blackburn

Here is a brief summary of the McCarthy's adoption process. My first introduction to the adoption process began in May 2003 when we initially attempted domestic adoption. When the process was delayed, we opted to pursue domestic and international routes simultaneously. With our international home study for Korea completed in December 2003, we matched with a Tennessee birthmother the next month. Two days before the baby's arrival, the birthmother changed her mind. On April 1st, 2004, we first laid eyes on our son, Miller, who arrived in the US on July 1st, 2004. After living with Miller for 3 years now, the four long, grueling months we waited are barely a memory. Two more failed domestic adoptions took place before our second adoption success. In December 2005, I looked at photo listings of waiting children I thought were available for adoption in the states. I contacted a Minnesota agency about Andre, but by the time we learned he was actually in Guatemala and that it would be significantly more expensive to adopt him, we were already in love and preparing to make the required sacrifices. After 13 months of struggling with Guatemalan rules and regulations, we were having problems getting his pink slip from the American Embassy. Frustrated and ready to bring our son home, my father contacted Congresswoman Marsha Blackburn's office for advice and help. Her aide, Stephanie Scott, was assigned to help us, and from the moment we initially spoke, we were in constant communication with the Congresswoman's office, even during Andre's homecoming and adjustment. Ms. Scott advocated on our behalf to the American Embassy in Guatemala and updated us with every e-mail. In

less than a week, we received our pink slip and had an Embassy appointment. Andre is a beautiful child with an endearing spirit. He is thriving today with our family, but without the help of both Congresswoman Blackburn and Ms. Scott, we have no idea what his fate would have been. Both of our children are adjusting beautifully. We have been blessed beyond words by adoption. So many times, I hear people say how fortunate my sons are to have found us. What they don't realize is that we are just as fortunate to have found them.

T E X A S

David and Jane Backus

Representative Randy Neugebauer

It is an honor and privilege to nominate Jane and David Backus of Lubbock, Texas as the 19th Congressional District's 2007 Angels in Adoption. Jane and David Backus are two true champions of adoption, who are no strangers to serving others. David Backus served his nation in the United States Marine Corps from 1985 – 1994, during which time he obtained his law degree from Texas Tech University in 1988. Jane and David first adopted Jake and Victor from Russia. Jake (11) and Victor (9) are a combination of Russian and Chinese; they both attend Trinity Christian School. Their daughter, who is Curran was adopted from China. She is now 5 and is in Kindergarten. Their youngest Ben, also from China, is two-years old.

Yvonne D. Garcia

Representative Mike Conaway

What a pleasure it is to nominate Yvonne Garcia, better known as "Y.D.", for Angels in Adoption. Ms. Garcia's work is truly amazing as she helps children through the transition from foster care to permanent placement and adoption. Recognizing the unique mental health needs of adopted children, her commitment and dedication to this cause is remarkable. Y.D. is well respected in the community and admired by her peers for her tireless efforts on behalf of children. She serves on numerous councils and is an active member of the Multidisciplinary Team of the Children's Advocacy Center of Tom Green Co., Inc. Working for "the best interest of the child" is a motto that gives foster and adoptive parents the compassion to

strive for making a difference in the life of a child, and an investment in their future. For the past 14 years, Yvonne D. Garcia has done just this and it is my honor to recommend her for this prestigious award.

Karalyn Heimlich

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison

Karalyn's compassion and empathy for children and families, both adoptive and birth, has made her a successful advocate for adoption. As Executive Director of Adoption Services for Lutheran Social Services of the South (LSS), Karalyn is responsible for placing thousands of children in loving homes throughout Texas. Additionally, she has worked to establish post-adoption services and open adoption policies in Texas. Karalyn is on the Executive Board of the Adopt 2000 Coalition and is a founding member and chair of the Adoption Coalition of Texas in Austin. These public/private partnerships help raise awareness about children in the foster care system and their needs. Karalyn has dedicated her life to finding loving homes for children and advocating on their behalf. She is a deserving recipient of the Angels in Adoption Award.

David and Mary Morales

Representative Lamar Smith

Article from "Catholic Spirit," December 2006 Issue By: Michele Chan Santos The first time David and Mary saw the five girls who would become their daughters, it was through a Web site called www.heartgallerytexas.com. The gallery of photos of the many children in foster care in Central Texas who are available for adoption is sponsored by the Project Adoption Coalition of Texas and CASA (Court-Appointed Special Advocates' see page 12.) David and Mary are devout Catholics who had tried unsuccessfully for three years to have a child biologically. The couple, both educated professionals, looked into adopting internationally, a popular choice for many couples. But they were dismayed by the high costs, which would limit them to adopting one or two children, at the most. Both David and Mary wanted a large family. "It's hard to explain what led us to explode our family so much but, in part, we're both very attached to our siblings and this is a way to give back to God for the great upbringing we had with our big sisters," Mary

said. "The cost of international adoption would have prohibited this for us." They decided to look into adopting a group of siblings through the state of Texas. "There are wonderful children right here in Travis County," David said. "You don't have to go all the way around the world to adopt." And then they saw the photo of the girls. "I'm the youngest of five girls," Mary said. "As soon as I saw their picture, I began praying for them. I thought, how are they ever going to stay together?" Meanwhile, the couple attended classes for several months to prepare to adopt children in foster care. Initially, they had applied to adopt two or three children. But then they learned that the state planned to split up the five sisters for adoption. The state agencies could not find anyone willing to take five children, so the plan was to have three girls go to one family, and two to another. (The girls had been removed from their biological parents' home three years ago because of neglect.) The couple prayed for a long time. They decided they wanted to adopt all five children ages 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9. In December of 2005, David and Mary were able to spend a day with the girls. The girls' foster mother did not tell them that David and Mary might be the ones to adopt them. She simply told the children that the couple were there to learn more about parenting a large family. But later one of the girls told David, "We prayed that you would be our parents." David and Mary's adoption application was successful. The couple knew the children would be moving into their four-bedroom home in March of 2006. So February was "nuts," David recalled. They bought children's furniture and moved it into what would become their daughters' bedrooms. Their friends and family threw showers for them. They set up a playroom and put up bookshelves. Mary quit her job in order to become a full-time mother. And on March 3, 2006, they went from being childless to having five children. Seven months later, the couple thinks the transition has been successful partly because of the support they have received. They credit their parish priest, a family counselor, friends at church, their family members and other Catholic couples for helping them make this huge change in such a smooth way. And every day, they thank God for the daughters who have completed their family. All the girls are healthy and doing well in school. When the couple was struggling with childlessness, "We

didn't know what God's plan was," David said. "Now we do." The best part of motherhood is "when I see little grace-filled moments," Mary said. "There's constant music in our house, because of the girls humming and singing. They're chirping. They're happy. I told my mother about it and she said, "You and your sisters used to do this." Mary's only regret is "that we didn't get into the system sooner, to be able to become a family earlier." The girls went from an unstable existence "they had gone from their original home, to a shelter, to foster care, been divided into two foster homes, then reunited in another foster home" to more permanence than they've ever known. "Sometimes they would say things like, "Where are we going next?" Mary said. "And I say, this is your forever home."

Shirley and Tom Patterson

Representative Nicholas Lampson

Tom and Shirley Patterson were foster parents to over 40 children between 1995 and 2003. Many of the children who came into the Patterson's home had a history of physical abuse and/or neglect. As a foster family with a "therapeutic foster care license," the Patterson's are trained to care for children who have serious emotional and behavioral difficulties. In the Patterson's household, the foster children were given the opportunity to work with rescued horses. By working with the rescued horses, the children were able to work through their personal issues with abuse and neglect. The Patterson family eventually adopted five of the children they fostered. Although they no longer provide foster care in their home, the Patterson's continue to be strong advocates for adoption and foster care. The couple provides support and encouragement to prospective foster care parents through Depelchin Children's Center. Shirley also has written two short stories for an inspirational book for foster and adoptive families entitled "A Swing in Every Tree." Aside from being foster and adoptive parents, the Patterson's also have four adult biological sons who have been supportive of their parents' quest to foster and adopt.

Robert and Amber Pena

Representative Sam Johnson

Robert and Amber Pena have been licensed foster/adopt parents with the Texas Department of

Family and Protective Services for approximately 6 years. They adopted their teenaged foster daughter during National Adoption Day 2006. She had been placed in their home after the death of her mother and was with them about a year before being adopted. There was no other family but an elderly grandfather who couldn't adopt her because he was in his 80's. The Pena's have maintained the relationship with their adopted daughter's grandfather, taking her to visit him when possible. Robert and Amber Pena are very quiet, mild mannered people who do not like to draw attention to themselves, but they go about fulfilling their role as both foster and adoptive parents very admirably. They are involved with the Collin County, Texas Foster Parent Association. They have a history of working closely with the birth parents of their foster children, when appropriate. It is not unusual for them to hear from parents of former foster children with updates on their children. The Pena's are in the process of adopting a sibling group of three. The youngest child is 2 and the oldest is 6. The Pena's are advocates of keeping siblings together. Their worker, Marilyn Sturdivant, describes them as "unsung heroes". Robert and Amber Pena are unsung heroes who serve as leading example of foster/adopt parents. The Pena's are to be commended.

Tracy Wolff, Erin Barry, and Arabia Vargas

Representative Charles Gonzalez

I choose to nominate Tracy Wolff, First Lady of Bexar County and Chair of the Hidalgo Foundation; Erin Barry, Chair of the Brent Barry Blue Ribbon Foundation; and Arabia Vargas, Attorney at Law and Chair of the Bexar County Children's Welfare Board, for an Angels in Adoption Award because of their hard work in creating the Heart Gallery in Bexar County. I believe Judge Peter Sakai, a former Angels of Adoption Award winner, has described the accomplishments of these three women best: "These three dynamic individuals have created a synergy in Bexar County in becoming, a leader and a model system for the adoption of foster children in the State of Texas. They have combined their efforts and commitment so that Bexar County is the only county in Texas and perhaps, the nation, that has a regular mass adoption of foster children on a monthly basis that has now

gone on for over 4 years. Bexar County routinely leads the State of Texas in the number of consummated adoptions of foster children as a result of these efforts. These three women have created the Heart Gallery in Bexar County that has created a community collaboration for the adoption of older, hard to place, teenage foster children. This collaboration has been embraced by the corporate community of San Antonio, such as Valero, San Antonio Water Systems, USAA, Christus Santa Rosa Hospital, and many other great San Antonio corporations. They have been the community leaders in bringing the awareness of child abuse and neglect to the forefront. They have gotten private foundations to commit their funds to the prevention and intervention of child abuse and neglect. The bottom line is that they have made a better place for the lives of children and they remain resolute in the fight to prevent and eliminate child abuse and neglect."

U T A H

Kevin Broderick

Senator Orrin G. Hatch

Kevin Broderick is a Social worker for LDS Family Services and has counseled hundreds of families on adoption. He has a BA in Family Sciences from BYU and a Master's in Family and Child Development from Virginia Tech. He is a licensed Family Therapist and has been providing counseling services to birth parents and adoptive parents for more than 11 years with LDS Family Services. He served as Co-Chair of the Adoption Development Outreach Planning Team, a voluntary child advocacy group focused on children's rights to permanent homes. He is currently the Adoption and Birth Parent Supervisor in the LDS Centerville, Utah office and a member of the Utah Adoption Council. He has volunteered to promote various proposed adoption legislation. Kevin has been married for 17 years and has 5 children. His wife placed a newborn for adoption giving Kevin a unique outlook and a firm belief in adoption as a positive option for unwed mothers, families and children.

V E R M O N T

Jim and Donna Bulger

Senator Patrick Leahy and Senator Bernard Sanders

Jim and Donna Bulger are loving, caring, and committed to children providing them with unconditional care. Foster parents since the 1970s, Jim and Donna have provided foster care to some extremely challenging youth. They have been a strong advocate for these children consistently making sure they are receiving the best treatment and their intense needs are being met. These loving and caring parents have spent many a night in the hospital with a sick child and believe in maintaining family connections within the child's family for a lifetime. The Bugler's positive impact on children in our state goes beyond their own home. Jim has spent countless hours at the State Legislature speaking on issues relating to foster care and adoption. Their impact on the community extends further to active membership on the school board and Vermont State Grange. We are proud to honor Jim and Donna Bulger as 2007 Angels in Adoption.

Dorsey Naylor, LICSW

Representative Peter Welch

A true Angel in Adoption, Dorsey Naylor has been working with children and families as an adoption social worker with Vermont Children's Aid Society since 1988. Her previous child welfare work was with the Woodstock Developmental Center in Vermont; Southern Home for Children in Philadelphia; Tufts New England Medical Center in Boston; and the Child Guidance Clinic of Fort Worth, Texas. She holds a BA in American Studies from Goucher College and a MSW from Smith College School for Social Work. Not only has Dorsey helped bring hundreds of Vermont families together in nearly 20 years of adoption social work, but she brings to all of her work her commitment to each person's dignity, strength and happiness. She is not just a resource for the families with whom she works but also for the community of adoptive families at large. She has been active in providing training and support for transracial and cross-cultural adoptive families. She serves on Vermont Adoption Consortium to help develop

and strengthen collaborative services for adoptive families. She has overseen the implementation of the national Infant Adoption Training Initiative to assure that Vermont's helping professionals have the information they need to help women with unintended pregnancies make informed decisions. In her career, Dorsey has seen many changes in the field of adoption, but her focus has not wavered. Because of her integrity, boundless energy and commitment, Vermont's adoptive families and those hoping to adopt, always have a professional and passionate advocate. Though there are many in Vermont who have contributed to the field of adoption, Dorsey is an angel indeed.

V I R G I N I A

Children of Chernobyl

Representative James Moran

Dr. Stein heads the Children of Chernobyl program for Christ Church in Alexandria, Virginia. This organization matches approx. 15-20 children each year from Belarus with host families in the region. Due to the effects of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, these children face significant health problems which recuperative trips to the West can greatly mitigate. Children live with their host families for six weeks, receiving much needed dental care and nourishing meals that help rid their bodies of toxins. A radiobiologist from the Academy of Sciences in Belarus found that the impact of a respite visit found that all 76 children found to be immune deficient before their travel abroad had normal cell function restored by six months after their return to Belarus.

Liberty Godparent Foundation

Representative Bob Goodlatte

The Liberty Godparent Foundation was established by the late Rev. Jerry Falwell. The foundation's mission is to improve the quality of life for unwed mothers and provide a hopeful future for unborn children. The foundation maintains Liberty Godparent Maternity Home, which offers a safe haven for unwed mothers, and Family Life Services Adoption Agency, which helps place unwanted children in safe and stable homes through adoption. The Liberty Godparent Foundation's Family Life Services Adoption Agency has been in place

since 1983. The Foundation works with birth parents throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia, in addition to residents of the Foundation's Maternity Home, who choose to place their babies in adoptive homes. On average, the Agency completes 15 domestic adoptions each year, as well as providing assistance to families looking for assistance in international adoptions. Family Life Services Adoption Agency works to provide services, beyond just placement, to both the birth parents and the adoptive parents, to help them through the adoption journey. For birth parents this includes counseling both during pregnancy and after placement, organizing support groups for birth mothers, and housing assistance to birth mothers. For adoptive parents these services include pairing prospective families with adoptive parents that have already completed the adoption process. This allows the prospective parents to have support and encouragement during the adoption journey. The Liberty Godparent Foundation has touched the lives of countless individuals across Virginia and the nation. For almost a quarter of a century they have been providing a unique service that has been successful in aiding unwed mothers and providing bright futures for children. The Liberty Godparent Foundation has been a blessing for so many individuals, and many individuals in the future will only continue to benefit from this tremendous gift.

Christine Narad

Senator John Warner

Christine Narad is a nurse practitioner who currently serves as the clinical director of the International Adoption Center at Inova Fairfax Hospital for Children. She aids families as they work through both their pre-adoption and post-adoption process. She serves as a critical lifeline for many families as they try to review the often confusing paperwork prior to adopting a child and as they struggle to make the choice to adopt a particular child. After the adoption occurs, she performs developmental testing on all of the children who are seen in the clinic helping to identify any problems and to develop a treatment plan to quickly initiate therapy. Ms. Narad developed and presents a five-week International Adoption parenting class which has become the model for such classes around the country. As she works to complete her doctorate degree in nursing, she is study-

ing the stress that parents experience as they go through the adoption process. For the past 3 years, as an advocate for orphaned children around the world, Ms. Narad has led a medical team to Honduras. She and her team have provided medical evaluations to over 660 children in the orphanage as well as 950 adults and children in the surrounding community.

Rodney M. Poole

Representative Eric Cantor

I am proud to nominate Mr. Rodney Poole of Richmond, Virginia as a recipient of the 2007 Angels in Adoption award. Mr. Poole helped establish the Richmond law firm Poole and Poole and has developed an expertise in legal services related to adoption, surrogacy, and assisted reproductive technology. Over the past thirty-four years, Mr. Poole has acted as legal representative and counselor to adopting parents, birth parents, intended parents, surrogates, gestational carriers, and egg donors in over 3,000 adoption proceedings. He regularly lectures to the Virginia State Bar and the public on adoption and assisted reproductive technology issues. Mr. Poole is an active member of state and national associations dedicated to adoption. After serving several terms as a member of its Board of Trustees, he was elected and served as President of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys (AAAA) from 1999-2000. During his term as president, he formed the Birth Parents' Rights Committee and the Special Needs Adoption Committee for the Academy. In 1995, he was appointed as liaison between the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys and the Association of the Administrators of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children. Mr. Poole is a Certified Adoption Mediator for AAAA and a Certified Guardian Ad Litem for the Commonwealth of Virginia. He was appointed to Virginia Department of Social Services' Adoption Advisory Committee and has also been involved in modifying adoption legislation in the Virginia General Assembly since 1989. Not only has he assisted other families in adopting, but Mr. Poole is also the proud parent of two adopted children, one birth child, and one stepchild. He has impacted the lives of countless children through adoption and exemplifies what it means to be an Angel in Adoption.

Randy and Evangeline Townley

Congresswoman Jo Ann Davis

Randy and Vangie's story is perhaps not unique – like many others nominated, they also faced many struggles and made personal sacrifices in their efforts to adopt their daughter, Dakota, from the Philippines, including extended periods of separation. Randy and Vangie suffered repeated setbacks in their efforts to bring Dakota home to the United States, but in the end, the Townleys were reunited and are enjoying being under the same roof as a family. I truly find Randy and Vangie's dedication to giving this wonderful child a loving, supportive home amazing. Their determination is an inspiration to others, and as a result, I felt it only appropriate to submit their names for consideration for recognition as Angels in Adoption.

WASHINGTON

Mark Demaray

Representative Jay Inslee

Mark Demaray is an adoptive parent and an attorney in private practice in Edmonds, Washington. For nearly 25 years, the primary focus of Mark's practice has been helping families and children, primarily in the adoption field. He represents adoptive parents, birth parents and adoption agencies and has assisted families with over 3,000 adoptions. Because of his high ethical standards, his compassion and his expertise in adoption-related matters, Mark is well known and very highly respected in the adoption community both locally and nationally. Since the 1980s he has been very active working with the Washington state legislature, volunteering many hours assisting with reviewing and drafting proposed legislation and consulting on matters relating to state laws on adoption. As a result, Washington is often a leader among the states in legislation that raises the standards of adoption practice and protects those involved in the adoption process. In addition, Mark frequently speaks at workshops and seminars, educating professionals and families on adoption-related issues. In 1986, Mark helped form the Washington State Adoption Council, bringing adoption practitioners together to raise standards of practice and ethics in the adoption community as a whole. He was a member of the

Washington State Senate's Interim Adoption Study in 1989, he was appointed to the Washington State Legislature's Washington State Adoption Commission in 1990. He was a member of the Washington State Legislature's Adoption Study Panel in 2004. Mark has been a member of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys since 1991 and is a member of that Academy's Board of Trustees.

Howard and Elizabeth Green

Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers

I am pleased to nominate Elizabeth and Howard Green as Angels in Adoption. Their five biological children, Caroline, Elizabeth, Alexander, Timothy, and Susannah have welcomed seven brothers and sisters into their family with open arms. In 2002, they first adopted Emily from China, who was 15 months old at the time. This addition to their family prompted the Greens to think further about enlarging their family, targeting children in need. They learned about four children in Ethiopia, Sarah, who was 11; Hannah, 9; Abel, 6; and little Benjamin, 4, who had lived with their birth parents until their father died of AIDS. They then moved in with an aunt and saw their mother regularly until she, too, died of the disease. Eventually, the aunt, who was too poor to care for the children, gave them to an orphanage. These four children became part of the Green family in 2004, and the Greens' biological children lost no time in partnering with their new siblings, helping to teach them English and the basics of American life. One year later, while the Greens were still adjusting to their new family of 10 children, they learned about two other Ethiopian orphans, Nathanael, 7, and Daniel, 6, in need of homes. In September of 2005, Liz and Howard traveled to Ethiopia to bring them back. The Greens have made efforts to keep their adopted children connected to the cultures they left, even celebrating Chinese New Year for Emily. They cook Ethiopian food and help their Ethiopian-born children stay in touch with friends from the orphanage through e-mail. Occasionally, the Greens call the aunt who cared for Sarah and her siblings, and they get together with other families who adopted children from Ethiopia. The children are also attempting to relearn their native Amharic language, using a CD. I wholeheartedly believe in the dedication of and

sacrifice the Green family has shown to children in need, and I know that they are truly deserving of being named Angels in Adoption.

Mike and Debby Jansen

Representative Dave Reichert

It gives me great pleasure to recognize Mike and Debby Jansen as Angels in Adoption. Mike and Debbie are a truly remarkable couple; deserving of this honor for their selfless work and sacrifice to provide children across Washington State with the greatest gift – family. Over the past nine years, Mike and Debby have opened their home and their hearts to eight newborns; all born to drug-addicted mothers. The Jansen's adopted children range in age from 19 months to 9 years. Their foster-to-adopt little girl is 5 months old, and they plan to adopt her as soon as she is legally available to be adopted. Mike and Debby also have two biological children; Nicholas, 28 and Jay Dee, 26. From a very young age Debby knew she'd like to adopt one day, but she never dreamed she and Mike would welcome so many children into their home. When the Jansens learned that their adopted children had siblings needing a home, splitting the children was never an option. Mike and Debby have adopted three sets of siblings. This dedication to keeping families together and eagerness to provide a loving home for some of our neediest children, and littlest victims of drug abuse, is very rare. The Jansens have not only made a difference in the lives of their seven, soon to be eight adopted children, but their kindness and compassion continue to inspire others throughout Washington State. For Mike and Debby, becoming adoptive parents has been their most rewarding experience. Each day they feel blessed to wake up to their children who fill their home and their hearts with joy and love.

Laurie Lippold

Senator Maria Cantwell

For over 25 years, Laurie Lippold has been a tireless advocate for children and families in Washington state and has been the Public Policy Director for Children's Home Society Washington (CHSW) for the past decade. Laurie's extensive career began with Youth Advocates in Seattle, Washington where she worked with youth in foster care. In 1986, Laurie joined the newly formed

Adoption Resource Center (ARC) as their community liaison. Through an effort of the ARC, Laurie entered the legislative arena and became an active voice on adoption issues. She worked closely with the Washington Adoption Rights Movement (WARM), a non-profit organization dedicated to reuniting families separated by adoption, and with them was instrumental in passing legislation that incorporated the WARM Confidential Intermediary System, which allows a Confidential Intermediary to conduct searches on behalf of adoptees and birth families. Laurie is active in a number of organizations. She is a member of the Children Alliance Public Policy Committee, Statewide Children's Policy Committee, the Seattle Children's Advisory Commission, and the Public Policy Committee of United Way of King County. Additionally, she is one of the founders of A Coalition for a Jewish Voice, is a Nathan Hale PTSA board member, and is Vice President of Siri Mayo Pediatric Sarcoma Research Guild. Ms. Laurie Lippold is married with two children.

Kathryn Olsen

Representative Jim McDermott

Kathryn Pope Olsen has worked tirelessly as an advocate for special-needs adoption, working for Adoption Advocates International around the globe since 1981. She has helped set up many different programs from Taiwan to Bulgaria to Ethiopia. In the US, Ms. Olsen joined a statewide support group for families that were adopting children from other countries. Ms. Olsen volunteered as a peer parent leader for local meetings, giving information to others that might be interested in adoption. She became active in advocating for both domestic and international adoption. Ms. Olsen's work in Ethiopia is particularly commendable. Seven years ago, Adoption Advocates International (AAI) started founding orphanages for children orphaned by AIDS who could be placed in adoptive homes in the USA. However, at that time the adoption of a child with HIV was not possible although one out of every six children recommended to the orphanage was HIV positive. AAI then set up a home for HIV positive children, and in 2002 Ms Olsen personally started a charity, AHOPE for Children, to support these children. AHOPE now provides key support for two children's homes in Addis Ababa exclusively for the

care of HIV positive children. The program also provides a community outreach program to encourage and support the remaining members of the HIV positive orphans' families to keep their children rather than abandon them to institutional care. Presently, there are about 90 children in the two orphanages and the outreach program is expecting to support an additional 100 children before the year's end. AHOPE for Children, through Ms. Olsen's efforts, is now working to build AHOPE Children's Village to care for up to 400 children onsite and provide offices, a clinic, classrooms, and a meeting hall for various uses of the program. Ms. Olsen's commitment to special-needs and older children's adoption can be seen not only in her work with AAI, but also in her personal life. Ms. Olsen has created a family of biological and adopted children of different ages, nationalities, and needs. After having two sons of their own, Eric and Carl, Ms. Olsen and her husband adopted eight-month-old Anne in 1973 from Korea, and then had a biological son, William, in 1974. Ten years later, they adopted eight-year-old Sonja from Korea. Finally, in 1995, Stuart and Karen joined the Olsen family from Bulgaria at ages 15 and 14. Stuart and Karen had serious health issues. In Stuart's case, Larsen Syndrome had led to severely deformed legs and his use of a wheelchair, while Karen had a known but untreated heart defect and malformed arms and hands. Ms. Olsen and her husband were not deterred by these health issues and stood by the newest members of their family as both children had multiple surgeries. The Olsen family has become an example of a successful adoptive family for their community. Ms. Olsen's dedication to ensuring that all children, regardless of age, race, or special needs get placed into a loving home is inspiring and makes her an ideal candidate for the Angels in Adoption Award.

WEST VIRGINIA

David Barnette

Representative Shelley Capito

David Barnette has been an advocate on behalf of children in need of homes for over 25 years. Mr. Barnette is considered among his professional colleagues as one of the best in the country at dealing with adoption issues. He has represented adoptive parents and also birth mothers. What

makes Mr. Barnette truly deserving is his volunteer work in trying to improve the adoption process. He was a member of the West Virginia Law Institute that revised the adoption laws in West Virginia in 1997. Mr. Barnette has spoken twice at the West Virginia Judicial Conference on Adoption Law, and has lectured on adoption law. Mr. Barnette appeared before a Joint Committee of the West Virginia Legislature to testify on proposed changes to adoption law. Mr. Barnette has represented clients in adoptions since 1981, handling about 50 cases per year for a total of about 1,000. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys and the adoptive father of two daughters.

Dennis Sutton

Senator John Rockefeller

Mr. Dennis Sutton has been an extraordinary leader for adoption and child welfare in West Virginia for decades. Most recently, he is joining with colleagues from 23 other states and DC to create a partnership, the Children's Home Society of America. Their goal is to help ensure that children have a safe, permanent, and loving home. This is a goal we share and the reason for tonight's Gala.

Dennis Sutton, Chief Executive Officer for the Children's Home Society of West Virginia has been an extraordinary leader for adoption. For decades he has been an advocate for permanency and believes that children need and deserve to have lifetime families. For the past 23 years Mr. Sutton has provided leadership to one of West Virginia's largest non-profit child welfare agencies while working collaboratively with legislative leaders and state officials to promote adoption and permanency. With an outstanding history this proven network for adoption is moving forward to create brighter futures by promoting healthy child development while ensuring safe and loving homes for children. The belief that permanency for all children is possible has become the foundation and work of this national effort by the Children's Home Society of America. Mr. Sutton and his colleagues are working diligently to engage communities for children's success and to promote nationally the importance of lifetime families.

WISCONSIN

John and Tammy Fredricks

Representative Paul Ryan

When asked to submit a nomination for the 2007 Angels in Adoption Award, John and Tammy Fredricks of Janesville, Wisconsin, instantly came to mind as two outstanding examples of the joy adoption can bring to a family. John and Tammy began their adoption journey in February 1998. They had one son at that time, Mykel, but decided they wanted to expand their family. After completing the necessary paperwork, in August 1998, they learned about a little girl by the name of Sreerupa (who would soon become known as Emily). Emily was just three months old, and she was a beautiful, healthy baby. After waiting seven months, the Fredricks came to my office to request assistance in maneuvering the complicated immigration paperwork necessary to complete their adoption. Finally after ten months of waiting, on June 15, 1999, they brought baby Emily home. Emily was 13 months old and an absolute doll. In February, 2002, the Fredricks family went to the airport to watch another family they knew well come home from India with their 6th child. It was at that moment they decided that they should pursue adopting a little sister for Emily and their son, Mykel. In August, 2002, they received their referral of Rachita, whom they named Katie. Katie was 20-months-old at the time, and she has been a wonderful addition to the Fredricks family as well. The Fredricks' adoption journey has not always been smooth, as many adoptive parents well know. But, their children are the center of their world, and caring for their family is their top priority. Their son Mykel is now 18 and has graduated high school and plans on going to college to major in political science. Emily is nine years old and will be entering the 3rd grade. Emily is gifted athletically and loves sports-basketball, swimming, gymnastics, and softball. Katie is six years old and will be entering first grade. Katie did wonderful in kindergarten. She has a fantastic sense of humor and is very much a free spirit. In the Fredricks' own words, "Adoption helped us complete our family and achieve such blessings and rewards that we could never have imagined. Our two daughters are more than worth all the time, sweat, energy and

money that it takes to go through the adoption journey!' Their love for one another, their dedication to their family, and their willingness to grow their family through adoption made them a clear choice as Angels in Adoption.

Carol Gapen

Representative Tammy Baldwin

Carol Gapen is a co-founder of The Law Center for Children & Families, Adoptions of Wisconsin, and The Surrogacy Center. She is a strong advocate of children's rights and practices in the areas of adoption, assisted reproduction, child protection, parentage for same-sex partners, grandparent and foster parent representation, and appellate law. Carol has practiced law for nearly twenty years; prior to attending law school, she served as a social worker for children who had been abused or neglected. Carol has devoted her professional life to the protection of children, in both the social service and the legal systems. Carol is particularly experienced in several specialty areas of children's law, including involuntary termination of parental rights, assisted reproduction, grandparent and foster parent rights, and same-sex parentage. She has written many briefs and memoranda which have been filed in appellate cases, some of which have changed the law for the benefit of children and the people who love and care for them in Wisconsin and other jurisdictions. Carol is a frequent speaker on the topics of child protection, assisted reproduction, grandparent and foster parent rights, and parentage, and she regularly contributes articles for publication in professional journals. She has distinguished herself as a strong advocate for permanency for children in the care of their grandparents or foster parents. Carol is a fellow of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys and the Wisconsin Academy of Adoption Lawyers. She is also a member of the Madison TEMPO. Carol resides in Verona, Wisconsin with her husband, Gary. She and Gary are the parents of three sons. In addition to her advocacy on behalf of her clients, Carol has been an expert resource to me and other policy makers. It has been a privilege during the fifteen years I have known Carol Gapen to have benefited so much from her wise counsel.

Angels in Adoption™ Gala

The Angels in Adoption™ Gala is the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute's (CCAI) signature public awareness program which provides an opportunity to all Members of Congress to honor hundreds of individuals who selflessly work to improve the lives of thousands of waiting children seeking permanent, loving homes in the United States and around the world. This program includes an annual event in Washington, D.C., the Angels in Adoption™ Gala, which is geared toward highlighting ordinary people doing extraordinary things. In addition to these "unsung heroes" chosen from all fifty states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. "National Angels" are recognized for their adoption and foster care advocacy on a broader, nationwide scale. Former "National Angels" include notables such as First Lady Laura Bush, Muhammad Ali, Bruce Willis, Jane Seymour, the late Dave Thomas, and Daunte Culpepper. Since the program's beginnings in 1999, Members of Congress have honored over 1,100 distinguished individuals. The Angels in Adoption™ Gala is the year's single most significant Congressional event pertaining to child welfare in the United States.

The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute

The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to raising awareness about the tens of thousands of orphans and foster children in the United States and the millions of orphans around the world in need of permanent, safe, and loving homes through adoption; and to eliminating the barriers that hinder these children from realizing their basic right of a family.

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James and Maureen Remillard

2005 Angels in Adoption™

Senator Edward M. Kennedy

Maureen and Jim Remillard were the proud parents of four children when they decided to extend, through adoption, the blessings of their family to children in need of care and love. People of deep Christian faith and values, they believed it their ministry, in their words, "to provide a home, and to be parents to, children who had lost, or never had, a family of their own." From this perspective, they set out on a wonderful and important journey that led them to adopt two children from Korea and then two from Ethiopia. At the time of their first Ethiopian adoption, that country's program was fairly new, but growing out of the tremendous need of so many children who were orphaned as a result of family disease, such as AIDS, and poverty. Undeterred by the Ethiopian program's newness, the Remillards soon adopted a 3-year-old boy of whom almost no family, health, or cultural information was known. All they knew was that he was alone in an orphanage and in need of a new family. Shortly after adopting their son from Ethiopia, they returned there to bring his sister home to be part of his new family. Maureen and Jim Remillard's commitment and dedication to extending a new home and a supportive and nurturing family to children without other options is truly an act of generosity that has made a profound difference in the lives of all their children.



“ A child is a person who is going to carry on what you started. He’s going to sit where you are sitting and when you are gone, attend to the things which you think are important...

The fate of humanity is in his hand.”

– Abraham Lincoln



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