

HAND IN HAND INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS

April, 2010

GREAT NEWS ON THE ADOPTION TAX CREDIT

As you may recall from previous newsletters, the much-appreciated adoption tax credit was set to “sundown” on December 31, 2010, which meant it would revert back to the original \$5000 amount. However, there is **good news** for adoptive families in the new health care bill passed by Congress. **House Rule 3590** includes a provision to extend the adoption tax credit until December 2011. It has also increased the amount of credit from \$12,170 to \$13,170. Lastly, it allows for the tax credit to be refundable, which is a never-before-seen feature! We aren't accountants, but we are pretty sure this means that if your credit is greater than the taxes you owe, the difference will be refunded to you as part of your tax refund.

COUNTRY UPDATES

China – The China Center of Adoption Affairs has most recently matched families with log-in dates of April 11, 2006. (We can report on where the China Center of Adoption Affairs is at in terms of their most recent matches, but we cannot accurately predict if that timeline will hold true for future families. Our long history in helping with China adoptions has shown the timelines to fluctuate greatly and often unpredictably. However, if you keep watching this newsletter, you can see if there is any speedup or slowdown in the process from month to month.)

China/Special Needs - We can assist with adoption of children from China who have special needs. This process is an expedited one open to families already with dossiers in China or those with dossiers in process.

Guatemala – We have not yet heard which countries and agencies Guatemala has chosen to work with for their pilot adoption program.

Haiti – Hand In Hand International Adoptions has been working to find forever families for the children of Haiti since 1990. We remain very committed to helping the children of Haiti who need homes to find loving, permanent families of their very own. Unfortunately, due to the January 12th earthquake in Haiti, we are not able to predict when the Haitian government and courts will be able to once again process adoptions for these children, nor are we able to predict the nature of the adoption process or requirements in the future. Therefore we are not currently taking new applications for Haiti. If you want to be added to a list of people to receive updates on Haiti, please notify any Hand In Hand office. (*See the related story in this newsletter about Karin Link's recent trip to Haiti.*)

Pakistan – We are very happy to report that Abundant Hope Children's Home is now officially licensed and registered with the Pakistani government!!! It has taken a long time, but was a very necessary step to become an official "first and only" Christian orphanage in Pakistan. We hope to soon be able to have the building and staff readied so that the custody of children can take place. Donations are still needed for the furnishings for the orphanage and the initial training of the staff which will be caring for the children.

Philippines – There continues to be a moratorium on applications for children up to two years of age. Applications for children over two are still being accepted. There are many children who are older or who have special needs or who are a part of a sibling group who need families. They are listed on a Special Home Find list and families can review the list and apply to adopt a child they think could fit well into their family. Contact the Indiana office if you want the list emailed to you.

Russia – Families are needed for children between 18 months old and ten years old.

REFLECTIONS ON HAITI: FROM DESPAIR TO HOPE

On April 2nd, Good Friday, Karin Link (our Haiti Program Director) will give this talk at her church and show video of her recent trip there. We think that what she shares will touch you deeply.

Three weeks ago tonight, my husband Dan and I returned from a trip to Port-au-Prince, Haiti. It had been two months since the devastating earthquake hit the already overcrowded and oppressed city, and we were stunned by how widespread the destruction truly was and how little had been done to clean it up. Having been to Haiti before and most recently in May, 2009, I was prepared for the widespread poverty and lack of general infrastructure in this country. But driving through the city, the sights of the earthquake destruction overwhelmed me. Tears soon started flowing, as I wept for the loss and the utter unfairness that such a struggling nation should have to deal with such tragedy. The hundreds of thousands who died, the millions who lived through it but struggle daily in the aftermath just to get water, not to mention food, medical care, or shelter – it all weighed heavily on us as we witnessed life in post-earthquake Haiti.

However, in the midst of despair, we also witnessed beauty and hope. In the midst of death, we were privileged to experience a song of life.

In Carrefour, a section of Port-au-Prince and the epicenter of the earthquake, there is rubble everywhere, the streets are impassable, and we see Haitians diligently working atop piles of cement rubble, at least 20 feet high. Despite the fact that there is no where to move the rubble and no way to dispose of it, they work in the unforgiving heat, using nothing but shovels the size of a garden spade. But we soon notice they are singing as they work, and above this pile of rubble rises the song of unity and perseverance.

In two rooms that now house 20 infants who lost their orphanage in the earthquake, we are surrounded by tiny children whose families were either killed in the earthquake or have disappeared since the disaster. Outside, the laundrywoman assigned to hand washing soiled sheets, clothing and diapers, works literally all day with no machines or dryers or spinners. The work is backbreaking and never ending, and she knows that indoors, the babies are in constant need and are creating more and more laundry for her. Through the open window, we hear that she is singing. And above the sound of crying babies rises a pure song of praise.

From the top of a building in downtown Port-au-Prince, we survey destroyed homes and schools and view a sea of makeshift tents. These shelters are made of tarps and plastic bags spread over corrugated tin or sticks. The thousands of homeless Haitians in these tent cities live in crowded conditions and unbelievable heat, surrounded by the constant sound of yelling and traffic. In the air above, we spot a homemade kite flying in the wind. It is made out of a plastic bag and tied to unwound cassette tape. Our eyes follow it to the ground below, where children are running and smiling up at their homemade toy. And above the sound of chaos rises a song of joy and hope.

In the midst of despair, hope. In the midst of death, a song of life.

HEPATITIS A VACCINE REQUIREMENT

To prevent hepatitis A infections associated with adoption from countries with high rates of hepatitis A, CDC recommends that all household members and caregivers of children who will be adopted receive hepatitis A vaccine before children are brought to the United States, even if those persons are not traveling themselves to meet the children. *(If you live in the state of Colorado, this is now a requirement. For other families, it may be good advice anyway.)*

UPCOMING INTERNET RADIO SHOW TOPICS

The internet radio show, **Creating a Family**, is an educational resource for adoptive families covering pre and post adoption issues. The show airs every Wednesday from 12:00 to 1:00 Eastern Time and all old shows are still available for listening at the radio page of www.creatingafamily.org. The next shows are:

April 7: Adopting out of birth order and Adopting More Than One

April 14: Living with FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder)

FAMILIES ADOPTING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS FROM CHINA

Please be advised that the China Center of Adoption Affairs has just issued new rules for how matching of special needs children is to be done. They now require that your dossier be logged in before you can be matched. They have also increased the time a family is given to consider a proposed match from 48 hours to 72 hours. So, keep working on your dossier. Ask us any questions you may have. When we are ready to send your dossier, we will also collect your Type of Child information so that our staff can match you as soon after your log-in date as a suitable child becomes available.

COULD YOU ADOPT A CHILD WITH DOWN SYNDROME?

We are looking for families who want to adopt a child from Russia and are specifically interested in adopting a child who has Down Syndrome. Families who adopt such a child from Bryansk, Moscow or St. Petersburg may be eligible to receive a special grant, as well as a reduction in the foreign fees. Contact Patricia at hihi@hihiadopt.org for more information.

(It's hard to explain how incredibly moving it is when officials in foreign countries finally realize that there are families who purposely choose to adopt a child who has special needs. It begins to wipe away their impressions of foreigners who just want to adopt a perfectly healthy baby who is as young as possible and who might look like them, and they begin to see people who are very loving and want to provide a good permanent family for a child who needs one.)

COMBINE A SUMMER VACATION WITH A PHILIPPINE CULTURE CAMP - HERE ARE THREE OPTIONS

COLORADO - The Filipino Heritage Camp is one of a handful of camps designed especially for families with children adopted from the Philippines/with Filipino heritage. It is committed to exploring both the cultural and the adoption aspects of growing as an adoptive family. FHC 2010 will be the first year in the history of FHC that two Filipino adult adoptees will be Co-Directing. Register at <http://heritagecamps.org/registrations.html>. The program cost for camps is \$95 - \$125 per person in the family, depending on grade level, with middle and high school being at the higher end due to extra activities at each camp. Lodging fees are in addition to camp program fees. Lodging is available onsite for Fraser, Winter Park, and Estes Park camps - cost is depending on the accommodation package selected. Average cost of lodging is \$175 per night for a family of four. Offsite lodging is also available should you choose to make your own reservations.

INDIANA - This is a one-day Filipino culture camp to be held in Kokomo, Indiana on June 12, 2010. Since 2004, parents and with Filipino volunteers from the Barangay Club of Indiana have worked together to prepare a fun-filled Filipino culture camp for families

called Camp Mabuhay. Although the camp is primarily designed for children of Filipino descent, all children are welcome to join in the fun. No prior knowledge of the Philippines is required of children or their parents. An interest in discovering Filipino culture is all that you need to have a great time at Camp Mabuhay Indiana, Inc. Activities for the day include: Traditional Dances, Music Activities, Language Activities, Museum, Art Projects, A Filipino Meal, Cooking Lessons, History of the Philippines, Games, Camp T-Shirt. To learn more and to register, email campmabuhayin@lycos.com

MARYLAND - The 15th Annual Camp Mabuhay theme is Camp Mabuhay's Got Talent: A Celebration of the Culture Using Music and Drama!! Camp Mabuhay is being held August 6th through 8th in Columbia, Maryland. The mission of Camp Mabuhay is to enrich the lives of our adopted Filipino children and their families through exposure to the culture and through the relationships built with similar adoptive families and the Filipino-American volunteers. For more information about Camp Mabuhay or to register for this year's Camp, please contact Debra Paul at campmabuhay@yahoo.com or call (603) 340-4602.

ARE YOU PLANNING TO ADOPT AN OLDER CHILD?

If you are planning to adopt an older child or a sibling set of children, it is possible that you may be considering adopting a child "out of birth order" or not younger than the youngest child in your family. Some agencies and professionals will tell you that this is never a good idea. Hand In Hand believes that it can work out fine as long as several factors are considered, e.g. ages, genders, personality types of the children already in your home, your willingness to treat each child individually based on his/her developmental levels and not "artificially twin" two of your children who are similar in age, having appropriate training about older-child adoption before you bring the child home, and your willingness to seek assistance after the adoption. Feel free to talk to any Hand In Hand office about this topic, or visit the Creating a Family website, which has a seven-minute video on adopting out of birth order available at <http://www.creatingafamily.org/adoption/videos.html> and written resources on the same topic available at <http://www.creatingafamily.org/adoption-resources/adopting-out-of-birth-order.html>

I WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MY CHILD'S HERITAGE

You have seen articles in this and other newsletters about a Philippine Motherland Tour and Philippine culture camps. If you have adopted from a different country and feel left out, check out this resource from Adoptive Families magazine for many other culture camps, heritage events, and homeland tours. It is listed by country and by state. Go to <http://www.adoptivefamilies.com/calendar/> and click on Culture Camps and Heritage Events.

CHILDREN WHO NEED FAMILIES

The following children are still in need of families. (We first wrote about them in January.) We have complete medical, photo and case history information on each child. Please contact us immediately if you are interested. (Prospective parents must meet the eligibility requirements for adopting from China.)

FC – boy born June 2006 – double auditory canals of atresia, and cleft palate - although has deformity on ears, we still can call him "handsome boy", he is kind, introverted and has a ready smile, he will smile whenever he sees the familiar persons. Although he was diagnosed as double auditory canals of atresia, he can still hear some sound of the outside world, and this doesn't affect

his love of music at all, he likes watching TV, especially listening to the music, he can imitate some amused actions from TV and makes the caretakers and other small friends burst their sides with laughter.

FWT – boy born January 2006 –**Diagnosis: congenital underdevelopment of right hand (wrist, palm and bones of fingers of right hand absence)** - On Aug.22 2006 he was fostered in a foster family, and soon adapted the family life. He likes to act like a spoiled child in foster mother's arms.

SY – boy born June 2005 – **congenital elbow joints, hip joints, dislocation deformity, not operated yet; congenital both feet TEV** – had diorthosis on 12/2/06 – the result was not good. can imitate drawing vertical lines, crosses, play in kneeling position, catch a ball thrown to him in kneeling position, do simple dancing motion (upper half-body), put on and off simple clothes, unbutton the clothes, have meals by spoon, like climbing motion. active, energetic, extroverted kid with strong memorize and fond of thinking, talking, smiling, playing games with kids, listening music, watching cartoon, such as Teletubbies, Ultraman. He would laugh aloud when happy. He is full of love. He would share his toy with other kids when they are crying and imitate adult's hushing the crying child.

FGY – boy born April, 2003 – **deformity of both feet, deformed left ankle joint which causes a limp** –has had a surgery - has normal intellectual development, likes to play with peers, is shy when staying with adults, talks lightly, dare not express his own thought and advice, has a ready smile when playing with others, sometimes can sing songs to relax his mood, has good receptive ability, can learn what adults teach him in time. Although he has deformed left ankle joint, he can walk easily, can not jump with both feet or hop or run fast.

GJF – boy born May, 2005 – **post operative bilateral cleft lip and palate** – he is smart, but he doesn't like getting alone with others. He is obstinate and timid sometimes. He is fond of listening to music and has a ready smile. He underwent an operation of cleft lip and palate prosthesis on Oct 17, 2006. The operation was successful and the cut recovered well.

LR- girl born January 2006 – **chondropathy** – **her lower limbs are weak** - she is able to crawl, use thumbs deftly, hold a pen with full hand and scribble, turn over pages of a book twice, cover a box with its cap, bang 2 blocks together, normal motor development of both hands; she could imitate words, introverted, kind of timid, be not to speak aloud with others, respond to others' asking for her objects, love to be cuddled by a caregiver, be cooperative when put on clothes, speak a sentence of 3-5 words, point to eyes, ears, mouth, nose and hands with her fingers and get along well with caregivers and other children; normal language skills, she knows her name, turns when called; distinguishes strangers and acquaintances; responds to adults' facial expressions; counts 1-3, knows "big" and "small", knows red and white colors, knows the functions of common goods, normal intellectual development.

ZCH – boy born June 2004 – **diagnosed with congenital nerve deafness**, has hearing aids; has normal intellectual development. Motor development: he can walk alone and go up and down stairs without help. He can hold a pen and imitate drawing vertical irregular picture. Adaptability: he understands big and small, pick out toys from toys box; and build 4 blocks, knows to cover the cap of bottle. Language and sociality: he knows acquaintance and is not afraid of stranger; likes to accompany with other acquaintance; he knows to imitate "mother", "nanny" and can take off and put on clothes. He can wash his hands by himself and is an active boy; may be a candidate for cochlear implant.

A KEEPSAKE BOOK ABOUT ADOPTION FROM CHINA

(We wrote about this book last month, and then received a gift copy from a family. It is absolutely gorgeous! The book is basically free, with the \$5.00 paying for the shipping of it.)

Love Without Boundaries, a non-profit group dedicated to assisting orphans in China, is offering a discounted price of \$5.00 for a beautiful hardbound coffee table book entitled "Love's Journey 2: The Red Thread". It has over 250 color pages with stories, essays, and

photos regarding children adopted from China. Anyone interested in adoption and helping orphaned children will love the book. It truly is a beautiful keepsake book. More information about the book can be found at: http://www.lovewithoutboundaries.com/loves_journey2.cfm. If you are interested in receiving these books, you can make your payment of \$5 per book securely at the donation page of our website at: <https://www.lovewithoutboundaries.com/donate.cfm>. Please indicate "LJ2 Shipping" in the Notes section. Alternatively, checks can be mailed to: LWB, P.O. Box 25016, Oklahoma City, OK 73125. Again, please be sure to indicate "LJ2 Shipping" with your payment.

UPCOMING HAND IN HAND EVENTS IN INDIANA

Saturday Classes: Day 2 – Saturday, April 17, 2010; Day 3 – Saturday, May 15, 2010; Day 4 – Saturday, June 19, 2010. Classes run from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM. *The classes do not have to be taken in any certain order. Contact our office if you are not certain whether you have attended all the classes you need.*

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

CAN YOU HELP?

As a non-profit agency, we are the voice for homeless and abandoned children of the world. Through these difficult economic times and natural disasters hitting so many countries, the voices of the children continue to cry out. They beg for their very existence, the most basic of needs, and we, as the most blessed nation and peoples on earth, need to respond. Please answer their cries. Send your tax deductible donations to Hand In Hand, c/o MaryLee Lane, Founder and Director, 9520 S.W. 9th Terrace, Ocala, FL 34476. Blessings, peace and thanks to all of you for your generous help. You will be blessed as you have blessed others!

HAND IN HAND IS A HAGUE-ACCREDITED ADOPTION AGENCY

Since February 29, 2008 Hand In Hand has had full accreditation by the US Department of State to perform adoptions under the Hague Convention. This means we are able to assist families with adoptions from any other country that is a party to the Hague Convention. The purpose of the Hague Convention is to safeguard the rights of children being adopted as well as the rights of the adoptive parents. Being accredited means we have met such standards as education of adoptive parents, professional qualifications and training of staff, ethical practices, maintenance of records, services after an adoption, etc.