

HAND IN HAND INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS

August, 2011

RUSSIA ADOPTION NEWS

Following is an article regarding a new adoption agreement between the US and Russia.

Secretary Clinton and Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov Sign Adoption Agreement July 13, 2011

The Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security announced today, July 13, 2011, that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov signed a bilateral adoptions agreement that will strengthen procedural safeguards in adoptions between our countries. This Agreement will provide additional safeguards to better protect the welfare and interests of children and all parties involved in intercountry adoptions. Under the Agreement, only adoption agencies authorized by the Russian government will be able to operate in Russia and provide services in adoptions covered by the Agreement, except in the case of an adoption of a child by his or her relatives. This will largely eliminate independent adoptions from Russia and create a better defined framework for intercountry adoptions between the United States and Russia. The Agreement also includes provisions designed to improve post-adoption reporting and monitoring and to ensure that prospective adoptive parents receive more complete information about adoptive children's social and medical histories and anticipated needs. The United States is committed to working with the Russian Federation on implementing the provisions laid forth in this Agreement as soon as it enters into force. The Department of State will publish criteria, procedures, and clear guidance related to the Agreement on www.adoption.state.gov prior to the Agreement's entry into force. For additional FAQs on the agreement, please visit adoption.state.gov.

Hand In Hand is pleased to have been assisting with adoptions from Russia since 1991. We are accredited by Russia to do so, having been listed as a non-government organization since 2006 and having non-expiring accreditation with the Ministry of Education since 2008. We can assist with the adoption of healthy children, those with minor correctable conditions, and those with special needs, as long as they meet the guidelines of Russian law and procedure.

I WOULD LIKE TO LEARN MORE...

If you are interested in reading a lengthy Q&A from the Department of Homeland Security about the above agreement between Russia and the US, contact the Indiana office of Hand In Hand and we will forward it to you.

COUNTRY UPDATES

China – The China Center of Adoption Affairs has most recently matched families with log-in dates of July 12, 2006. *If your dossier is logged in for a regular match and you are getting discouraged with the wait, please know that you can consider the match of a special needs child without removing your dossier from your “place in line” at CCAA. If you know you want to do this, please contact Vickie Truelove at hihiadopt@frontier.com and submit an updated Type of Child form so that our staff in China can know which child may be a possibility for you.*

China/Special Needs – We can now assist families with adoption of children with special needs from China in three ways, including being matched from the Shared List, being matched to a child who has been designated “Special Focus” because he or she has waited over a month to be matched, or by adopting a child from Guizhou Province where Hand In Hand has a direct relationship to help match waiting children. (See the article about this new program elsewhere in this newsletter.)

China and Single Applicants – As of March 15, 2011 it is now possible for single females to adopt a child through China's Special Focus program. The specific requirements the applicant has to meet can be found on the US State Department website at:

http://adoption.state.gov/country_information/country_specific_alerts_notices.php?alert_notice_type=notices&alert_notice_file=china_1

Persons interested in this option can contact any Hand In Hand office for information on which Special Focus children are currently waiting for families. Brief information on the children is also posted on Hand In Hand's Facebook page.

China – Two children - It is now possible for a married couple to adopt two children from China at once or successively in the same year if at least one of them is a Special Focus child. In most cases the same dossier can be used (with a few additions) so the costs can be reduced for the second case.

Haiti - Adoptions are progressing in Haiti, and Hand In Hand is excited to have several families matched with children through this program. The adoption process in Haiti now requires that adoptive parents make two trips to Port-au-Prince in order to complete the adoption. After the dossier is approved by IBESR (the government department responsible for approving international adoptions), one or both adoptive parents must travel for one trip of four or five business days to appear in both lower and higher courts (these court hearings will take place in the same week). Then, one or both adoptive parents must travel again after immigration has been approved in order to bring the child home to the United States.

Philippines – The Philippines has issued a temporary moratorium on applications from families wanting young, healthy children. Their goal is to place children with the already approved applicants before opening their doors for more applications. For those families waiting for a match, we have been advised that they are currently prioritizing families who were approved for adoption in the third quarter of 2008. (The moratorium does not apply to children over 9 years old or those with special needs.)

Philippines Special Home Find - There are many Filipino 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. We are also excited about a special program we have in Russia where we can assist in the placement of children with Down Syndrome. If this interests you, please contact us for more information.

NEW CHINA PROGRAM

HAND IN HAND has initiated a new special needs adoption program in China. This one will be in addition to our current Shared List and Special Focus programs. The new program will help to place children with mild to moderate special needs who are specifically from the Qian Nan Child Welfare Institute in Guizhou Province. Some of the children will be able to be matched to new families, while others will need to be matched to families who already have a dossier submitted to China through Hand In Hand. The fees for this program will be approximately \$750 more than for the other two China programs because we will be helping to provide special programs and services for the orphanage.

HEAR HEATHER FORBES IN PERSON

Heather Forbes is widely known as a speaker on the “Beyond Consequences” approach to raising healthy children. She offers free one-day seminars. Visit her website for more information about Beyond Consequences. Listed below is an upcoming seminar in Fort Wayne, Indiana. <http://www.beyondconsequences.com/>

Saturday, September 17, 2011 – 9 AM to 4 PM
Fellowship Missionary Church, 2536 E. Tillman Rd, Fort Wayne, IN

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

To help commemorate 15 years of adoptive placements, the Chinese officials recently collected stories, poetry, photos and art from adoptive families for a series of activities they were planning with the theme of Adoption Month. Following are stories submitted by two of our families:

FROM AN INDIANA FAMILY: How can I convey to you in simple mortal words the love we have for our little girl, now eight years of age, filled with goodness, love, generosity, kindness, mercy and compassion with a zest and enthusiasm for life who wears a constant smile? Our daughter, inquisitive, brilliant, beautiful and extraordinary, is “daddy’s little girl” and my “little helper”. How does a mother even begin to express her deep level of gratitude for a country and a people who showed us such great kindness and generosity when giving my husband and me this treasure, a little girl with such sparkle and vibrancy that anyone who meets her falls in love with her in an instant? On January 15 of this year, Randy wrote an article for our adoption blog at <http://yiandmeitogether.blogspot.com> entitled “Nothing Better Than Kids” describing his journey into fatherhood and more specifically his fathering of our sweet Sonya. His words regarding his decision to adopt: *“To my surprise, what I thought to be an act of sacrificial love really turned out to be a beautiful gift to myself. Oh sure, the apprehension would return sometimes during our two year wait, along with moments of sheer angst when learning what is required in an international adoption. But do you want to know something? Adopting Sonya is the very best thing I have ever done! My daughter is the “apple of my eye”. I have come to realize what a precious gift a child is. I cannot imagine loving a biological daughter any more than I love Sonya. I am sure all the parents out there know what I am saying. For those of you contemplating this decision, I cannot say enough good about becoming a parent.”* ... Sonya, with an insatiable love for the outdoors who would rather be dribbling a basketball or shooting her bow and arrow over playing with dolls any day loves to sing and whistle and build interesting things with cardboard boxes. She especially loves to do art. She attends a professional art studio called Garden of Arts where she is so inclined to bring to life on paper her natural, God-given abilities as a little artist. Randy and I are preparing for our second China adoption of our second China-born daughter, a little sister and lifelong friend for Sonya. Many months ago as Randy and I began our initial deliberations on how we would manage gathering the necessary resources to make this adoption happen, Sonya overheard a conversation between the two of us concerning whether or not there would be enough money to take her along with us to China to bring back her little sister. It didn't take Sonya long to devise a plan to make sure she would not be left behind...I've since been able to persuade Sonya to sell her art work ... in order to raise the necessary funds to make her trip happen. Sonya has managed to raise close to \$250.00 at this point which will be used exclusively toward her roundtrip airline ticket to China. When discovering the amount of her earnings, Sonya quickly responded by saying, *“Mom, I would like a part of the money to go toward my ticket and a part of it to go toward sissy’s ticket.”* Apparently, Sonya wants to make sure she plays an integral part in getting her little sister home.

FROM A FLORIDA FAMILY: The desire to adopt a child was planted in our hearts long before we made the call to Hand in Hand International Adoptions. We first met little Sarah in Guangzhou on September 7, 2009. With much joy we all greeted “Chan Hong Cao” and the loving people from True Children’s Home. After arriving home in Florida we soon settled into our family routine. We educate our children at home. This has proven to be a huge advantage for Sarah (Hong Cao), as we did encounter the usual learning delays. Sarah continues to receive excellent medical care and regular speech therapy. Sarah is now doing very well with her school studies. She is very loving to our whole

family and she in turn receives much love from friends and family. Adopting Sarah has given us the opportunity to show so many people the incredible joy that can be spread through this act of love. We are so grateful for these blessings!

ARRIVALS

In no particular time order, here are some Hand In Hand arrivals to announce. We congratulate these families! We also hope this serves to encourage those families who are still waiting and thinking, “Will it ever happen for me?!”

Child’s New Name	Age at Arrival	Country Coming From	State Living In
Sophie L.	1 ½	China	AZ
Gavin H.	2	Philippines	IN
Michael B.	2 ½	Philippines	TX
Maria J.	1 ½	Russia	IN
Shelby S.	2	Philippines	IN
Luke E.	7	Philippines	IN
Nino P.	2 ½	Philippines	FL
Paula L.	13	Philippines	KY
Josh C.	10	Philippines	IN
Cate C.	9	Philippines	IN
Cyrus M.	1 ½	Philippines	CO
Luke R.	7	Russia	TX

RECOMMENDED ADOPTION EDUCATION

If you live in a state where Hand In Hand has an office, you are able to attend our excellent adoption education series before you bring a child into your home. However, if you live elsewhere (or are just an avid learner looking for numerous opportunities to increase your knowledge and understanding of adoption issues and the raising of adopted children), we recommend **The Heart of the Matter seminars**. Take a quick peek at their website and you will see several timely and relevant topics that are covered. There are recorded courses available on online that meet the requirements of the Hague Convention, as well as live webinars and recordings of past webinars on topics such as Managing Your Child’s Bid for Power, Understanding Child Trauma, Talking to Your Children About Adoption, etc. Visit them at www.theheartofthematterseminars.com .

PHILIPPINE CHILDREN FOR SPECIAL HOME FIND

We’ve received information on several new children needing families. Our list of waiting children is now 35 pages long (that’s one paragraph per child and small font!) Email us if you want to receive a copy of the list. Or look for it on our website. Then if you see children who interest you we can send you photos and more complete information. Perhaps there is a child on that list who is waiting for YOUR family!

A FREE ONE-DAY ADOPTION EVENT

DEFEND THE CAUSE – An Adoption and Orphan Care Expo

Saturday, August 13, 2011 from 9 AM to 2 PM

Gray Road Baptist Church, 5500 S. Gray Road, Indianapolis, IN 46237

Come to this free event that brings together organizations focused on foster care, adoption and other related services. In addition to booths for various organizations, there will be two educational seminars:

How to Pay for an Adoption and Fears Associated with Pursuing Adoption.

Contact 317-784-4484 or office@grayroad.com for more information.

SPECIAL FOCUS CHILDREN

These are children from China who are waiting for families:

Boy 614A - boy born 8/17/07 - post operative meningocele - he has been in a foster home since September, 2007. He is timid and shy. He likes playing with little friends and with his foster mother outside. He can walk and run very well, go up and down stairs, has good language skills, and likes playing with toy cars. He can sing many children's songs and studies well in nursery school. The meningocele on his lower back has been surgically removed.

Boy 614C - boy born 4/28/09 - epilepsy - he is on anti-seizure medication - when he has a seizure, it may last 2-3 minutes. Otherwise, he is a normal kid and a lovely boy who everybody likes.

Girl 629A - girl born 11/5/05 - mental delay, strabismus and possible tuberous sclerosis - she likes to watch cartoons and play outside with all kinds of toys and games. She likes music and mimics dancing when watching TV.

Boy 226 B - 1/23/03 - This handsome young 8-year-old boy has had cleft lip and palate repair surgeries. He has lived with a foster family since age six. He is an average learner. He can sometimes be naughty about doing his chores. He gets along well with other children.

Boy 226 C - 7/30/07 - This cute little 3-year-old boy has deformities of his limbs. He cannot walk but he can scoot around on his rear. He has an outgoing personality, likes to listen to music and smile, likes colorful toys, and likes to play outdoor games. He likes to draw.

Boy 226 D - 8/21/03 - This 7 ½ year old bright young boy has had corrective surgery for club feet. Now he can walk, run, jump alone, his other growth is normal, he has good self-care ability, can help do housework, e.g. sweep the floor, take out the trash etc. He likes writing Chinese characters, drawing, reading, likes to have discussions on schoolwork with the kids around him, listens to the teachers attentively, can answer the teachers' questions after thinking over them. He is a kid who is good at studying.

Boy 226 E - 8/10/03 - This 7 ½ year old little boy has congenital absence deformity of bones on the left hand and carpal bones, syncretic deformity of near tip of the left radius and ulna. Firstly since he lived in the welfare institute and seldom communicated with other, he was shy and not talkative. After a period, the teachers communicated with him actively, and other children played with him actively, he became outgoing. He turned to be active, and could communicate with others on his own. Though he only has one hand, he could take care of himself in the daily life. He would tidy up his bedclothes after getting up. He is friendly to other children in this institute, would help others actively. When he is free, he would help the caretakers to take care of other children and play with them.

We have photos and case studies on each child. Contact us at hihiadopt@frontier.com to see more about one of these children. We have three months to try to find each child a family. Once a family identifies a child they would like to adopt, they have six months to submit a dossier if one is not already in China. A family may be working on two adoptions in China at the same time, if at least one of them includes a Special Focus child.

UPDATE FROM PAKISTAN

As many of you know, Hand In Hand began a program for abandoned and orphaned children in Pakistan a couple of years ago. Many families were involved in the program, stepping forward to open their hearts and homes to the little ones. Through the blessing of donors, Hand In Hand was about ready to open the doors of the first Christian Children's Orphanage in Faisalabad, Pakistan, when our coordinator, Pastor Rashid and his brother Sajid were gunned down. The younger brother of these two saints has taken over their ministry. Even though the time is not right for opening an orphanage in Pakistan due to the unrest, the population of Christians has grown and expanded. Pastor Ahsan is in dire need of 4,000 Bibles translated into the Urdu language for new believers. Each Bible can be purchased for \$5.00. If you, your church, or friends would like to contribute to help Pastor Rashid's brother obtain these needed Bibles, you may send your tax deductible donations to Hand In Hand, noting how many Bibles you would like to purchase. Hand In Hand will then wire the monies to Pastor Ahsan no later than September 1st. Please keep the people of Pakistan in your prayers.

MaryLee Lane

MOTHERLAND TOUR TO THE PHILIPPINES

Any adoptees, families, grandparents, who would like to take a trip of a lifetime to the country of their birth or child's birth, we'd love to have you contact marylee@hihiadopt.org and express your desire. The last few years have seen a few travelers, but not enough for a large enough group to keep the costs low. We are starting now to take names and make reservations early for anyone that would like to participate in this fun, exciting, heart touching trip in the summer of 2012. Reservations will close as of October 30, 2011, so be sure to let MaryLee know soon if you have any interest!

UPCOMING HAND IN HAND EVENTS IN INDIANA

Free Orientation on Adoption: Wednesday, August 31, 2011 at 7PM – St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 210 N. Orange St., Albion, IN 46701. RSVP at 260-636-3566 or hihiadopt@frontier.com .

Hand In Hand Adoptive Parents Training Classes: Day 4 – Saturday, August 13, 2011; Day 2 – Saturday, September 10, 2011; Day 3 – Saturday, October 15, 2011. All classes are at the Hand In Hand office and are from 8:30 AM to 4 PM. Contact us if you are unsure of which classes you still need to attend.

RAINBOW KIDS

Hand In Hand is now on Rainbow Kids. This provides us an opportunity to use their extensive networking to help find families for waiting children. Check them out at www.rainbowkids.com and sign up to receive their free on-line newsletters.

YOU CAN BENEFIT BY REFERRING A FAMILY TO HAND IN HAND

If you are already a Hand In Hand family (past or present) and you refer a family to Hand In Hand and they submit an application any time after May 1, 2010 and indicate on it that you referred them, Hand In Hand will give you a \$200 credit toward your next Hand In Hand payment for either your current adoption process or your next adoption with Hand In Hand.

HAND IN HAND ON FACEBOOK

Search for Hand In Hand International Adoptions or visit the following link:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Hand-In-Hand-International-Adoptions/126410800748612> Please "like" our page and suggest it to your Facebook friends so that we can spread the word about the many waiting children.

CAN YOU HELP CHILDREN WHO ARE STILL WAITING?

As a non-profit agency, we are the voice for homeless and abandoned children of the world. These children have year-round needs. If you are not able to provide an adoptive home for another waiting child, consider a donation that will assist another family to do so, or that will assist in a project for children who wait. 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.

