

HAND IN HAND INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS

June, 2010

COUNTRY UPDATES

China – The China Center of Adoption Affairs has most recently matched families with log-in dates of April 21, 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@verizon.net and submit an updated Type of Child form so that our staff in China can know which child may be a possibility for you. Types of special needs of children matched recently include: deformed toes, heart defect already surgically repaired, cleft lip and/or palate with lip already repaired, burn scar on arm, missing limb, positive Hepatitis B, delayed motor development, etc. Once a child is referred to you, you have 48 to 72 hours to consider it and you are able to say No without negative repercussion.*

China/Special Needs - We can assist with adoption of children from China who have special needs. This process is an expedited one. Contact hihiadopt@verizon.net for more details.

Guatemala – We are still waiting to hear news of which countries Guatemala has chosen for a pilot program.

Haiti – Haiti has re-opened for applications for children who were either documented as orphans prior to the January 12, 2010 earthquake or children whose parent(s) have legally relinquished them since the quake. On March 12, 2010, our Haiti Program director returned from a trip to Port-au-Prince, where she visited the orphanages and hand-carried 200 pounds of much-needed supplies. The children there are doing well, have received supplies and necessities (largely through Hand In Hand's Haiti Relief Fund), and the orphanage director is excited to work with us again to place children with permanent, loving families.

Pakistan – May was a Banner Month for Abundant Hope Children's Home in Pakistan. The initial donated monies to begin the work on the rented facility and to pay for the first 6 month's rent was received and immediately transferred. “White Washing” of all of the inside of the building is being accomplished along with the purchase of beds, bedding, clothing, toys, medicines, etc. that will be used for the children who will be entering this first licensed and registered Christian Orphanage in the country. Pastor Rashid was able to meet with Frank at the U.S. Embassy and we are hopeful that Frank will be able to make a trip to visit Abundant Hope once the doors are open, so that he can witness firsthand the children in need and see the care that they are being given. Thanks to all who have assisted through their prayers, donations, and patience, so that this milestone could be reached. Five prospective families have requested to be considered for the Pilot Program of adoption, once children begin entering the facility and their paperwork is complete. Currently four other families are completing their paperwork, so that if all proceeds well with the first few cases, there will be more waiting families to become the parents of these orphaned and abandoned little ones. Keep the work at Abundant Hope in your prayers. The need is truly there and the children deserve a future filled with abundant hope.

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.

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. *See the related article about the current status of Russian adoptions.*

UPDATE ON ADOPTIONS FROM RUSSIA

The US State Department's latest update on Russia reads as follows: A U.S. interagency team met with their Russian counterparts in Moscow May 12 – 14 to discuss an adoption agreement. This most recent round of negotiations ended Friday, May 14, after three days of positive and productive talks. Both sides are committed to the common goal of increasing safeguards for adoption between Russia and the United States. “We listened to each other's concerns and made significant progress toward an agreement that will improve the safeguards in the inter-country adoption process,” said the head of the U.S. delegation. The meeting participants shared their views on how to improve existing processes to better protect the children and families involved in inter-country adoption. The discussions were detailed and concerned specific issues, including the domestic laws and international obligations of both countries. The negotiating teams are working on language of a draft agreement and plan to meet again in the coming weeks. The next meeting will likely be in Washington in June. It is our understanding that there has been no change in the status of on-going inter-country adoptions originating from Russia. Many thousands of Russian children, who were not adopted by Russian families, have found loving, safe and permanent homes in the United States through inter-country adoption. We are pleased to be discussing with the Russian government a future approach to ensure inter-country adoptions continue.

HAND IN HAND remains committed to finding good homes for Russian children. This has always been a good alternative for families in the United States and there are fewer agencies currently accredited by Russia to provide families for these children. And if Russia chooses to join the Hague Convention in the future, Hand In Hand will be among the few agencies that is both accredited in Russia and Hague-accredited.

REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS IN ADOPTION

Three different people have shared information with us in the past week about this free download from EMK Press. It contains 50 pages of very insightful information, with section titles including the following: *Top Ten Tips for Successful First Year Parenting*, *What is this Thing Called Sleep?*, *Alone No More – Recognizing Post-Adoption Depression*, *Strategies to Deal with Anger and Power Struggles*, *Why Grandma Can't Pick Up the Baby (Yet)*, etc. We encourage you to check it out now and also save it for future reference.

<http://www.emkpress.com/pdf/Realistic%20Expectations5.20.pdf>

LET'S HAVE A PICNIC!

INDIANA - Saturday, July 24, 2010 – 11:30 AM to 4 PM – Pownall Pavilion, Bixler Lake Park, Kendallville, Indiana -Please join us for an afternoon of fun at the lake. Bring one or more dishes to share, depending on the size of your family. Also bring your own table service. Coffee and punch will be provided. There is a \$2.00 entry fee into the park. Please bring your own lawn chairs or picnic blankets. Games will be provided for the children. The pavilion is near a swimming beach, so bring swimsuits, towels, and sand toys too.

MINNESOTA - The annual Minnesota Hand In Hand Summer Picnic will take place Sunday, July 25, 2010 from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. at Como Park Picnic Pavilion in St. Paul, Minnesota. Invitations will be sent via email in May. We look forward to seeing all of you again!

COLORADO - Our Colorado Summer picnic will be held Sunday, July 17, 2010 – NOON to 3 PM at City Park in Fort Collins, Colorado. Please join us for a pot luck lunch under the picnic shelters near the playground. Our area will be marked with blue and white streamers. Water, lemonade, and hotdogs will be provided along with plates and plastic ware. There is a children's train nearby that offers rides for

\$2/person. The City Park outdoor pool will also be open that day. Come enjoy good fun, picnic games, and great company! Can't wait to see you there! More information will be sent out via email soon

WHO SHOULD COME? Whether you are already home with your child or still waiting for the placement of a child, please come and share the day with other adoptive families. Extended family members are also welcome to come.

BEYOND CULTURE CAMP: AN ADOPTIVE PARENT'S GUIDE TO HEALTHY IDENTITY FORMATION IN ADOPTION

All parents want their children to grow up with a healthy sense of self. Yet for transracially formed adoptive families, the notion that this will naturally develop cannot be taken for granted. For these families, adoption is an obvious component of who they are. They may face questions from perfect strangers about being adopted, whether they invite the discussion or not. What's more, society's persistent race-based stereotypes will likely impact these adopted persons in ways that their parents may not have personally experienced or even anticipated. *This will be the topic of an Adoption Learning Partners Webinar on June 23, 2010 from 7-8 PM Central Time.* More than 450 adult adoptees were surveyed to better understand the complex and inter-related impacts of being adopted and being raised by parents of a different ethnicity. Respondents reflected back on their childhood, adolescence and adulthood, giving powerful insights as to what helped them gain a positive sense of self and what hindered that development. Adam Pertman, Executive Director of the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, will review key findings from the study, ending with practical recommendations for adoptive parents on how to promote a healthy sense of self in their transracially placed children. Following this review, webinar participants will get a unique chance to hear from two transracially placed adult adoptees who will give their personal perspectives on the topic as well as field as many questions from the audience as time allows. Register by contacting Kathryn@nightlight.org There is a \$15.00 registration fee.

ADOPTION LOANS AND GRANTS

Many of our families or prospective families ask us for advice on finding loans or grants to assist them in financing their adoption. We gladly share information about agencies that families have used successfully in the past. Many families will do a Google search and hunt for information. Here though is a website that has a lot of information in one place: <http://www.angelfire.com/journal/adoptionhelp/1ADOPTIONLOANS.html>

COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES ADOPTING FROM CHINA

We've shared information about this website before, but it bears repeating. [weninchina.com](http://www.weninchina.com) is written by an adoptive family and designed specifically for families who adopt. They continue to add features of interest to adoptive families who are waiting for travel dates, those "on the road", and those who want to learn more about their child's birth country. Some of the features include walk-throughs of the airports in Guangzhou and Tokyo, guides to the North American gateways of Seattle/Tacoma and Minneapolis/St. Paul, Transpacific Flight Options article with seasonal changes and updates of new flight services, essays about Chinese culture, including background information about Chinese New Year, lists and translations of common written characters families will see on their trip, and the popular Essential Mandarin Phrases "cheat sheet". They also have resources for families to use in China and back home, including live weather forecasts for many Chinese cities, exchange rate information, and downloadable maps free to use in blogs and presentations. They also feature 59 essays on various topics with a link to a printable PDF version for printing to read off-line. Contact the author at weninchinainfo@mac.com or visit the website at www.weninchina.com.

SAYING MY GOODBYES

Irene Weinberg, Social Worker

Fourteen years ago in March, I first met Vickie Truelove when she came to Indianapolis for a Hand in Hand Information Meeting. I was about to retire from working at the Veterans Hospital and I was answering an ad that Vickie had placed with the National Association of Social Workers for a part-time Social Worker who lived in the Indianapolis area. Well, it is now many home studies and 78 adoptive placements later and I am retiring from Hand in Hand. Thanks to all of you who have shared your stories with me about your trips to Russia, Moldova, China, the Philippines, Haiti and Guatemala. And, thanks for sharing your children with me. And, another thanks for your understanding when I had to change visit plans due to our sometimes difficult or impossible Hoosier weather. I will miss seeing all of you but I might show up at one of the picnics or holiday parties just to catch up. Thanks also to Hand in Hand. This job hasn't seemed at all like work. I couldn't end my Social Work career on a happier note!

CAN YOU HOST A FILIPINO GUEST (OR TWO) IN YOUR HOME FOR A FEW DAYS?

Two social workers from the Philippines will be escorting a group of ten children to Indiana this summer. The children will be staying with prospective adoptive parents for one month. We are looking for families who would like to host or entertain the two social workers for one or more days during that month. This is an excellent opportunity for families waiting for a match to learn the workings of international adoption from people on the matching and placing side of the process. Or for families already home with their children, an opportunity to share how well your family is doing. Or for those who just like entertaining or learning about other cultures, an opportunity to learn more about the Philippines and its people. The expected dates of the trip are July 11 to August 10. Contact the Indiana office of Hand In Hand if you are interested in helping.

CHILDREN WHO NEED FAMILIES

Twin seven-year-old boys – These Caucasian brothers are healthy with only the typical “delay of psychic and speech development” that can be expected in children who are raised in an orphanage.

Maria Christina – Asian girl born 2/07; birth mother voluntarily surrendered the child. She has had castings for bilateral clubfoot. She was also diagnosed to have Cerebral Palsy, Spastic Quadriplegia and Global Developmental Delay. She has a GT tube for feeding. She tries to position herself on her knees, pull herself and make prone position, elevates her chest supported by her two arms but she still prefers to be in lying position. She turns her head when called and will smile when tickled or played with.

Nicole Grace – Asian girl born 7/07; birth mother voluntarily surrendered her. Nicole has asymmetrical facial features. Based on her cranial CT scan result, it showed craniosynostosis. Nicole exhibits mild language delay probably due to lack of stimulating environment. Nicole is an active and playful child. She is also considered as helpful around the nursery. She acts as the older sister towards the other babies. She helps in giving their milk and pacifying them. She communicates using single words and a few phrases. She can follow commands and understand more than what she can speak.

Eduard – Asian boy born 2/07; was voluntarily surrendered. Assessed to have Global Developmental Delay with Colossal Dysgenesis. At present, progress is observed. He can sit, pull self to standing position while holding onto a stable object and can move from lying to sitting position. He can throw a ball forward and walk if supported. He vocalizes sounds but could not produce any single word. He comes to the person who calls his name when it is time for eating or bathing. He shows desire to be held and cuddled. He can follow instructions to daily routine.

John Nicholas – Asian boy born 10/06 was abandoned; diagnosed to have Cerebral Palsy, Cortical blindness and Seizure Disorder. He had his speech therapy and was observed to have limited skills for language learning, has difficulty maintaining lip seal, and has limited oral peripheral mechanism movements and strength. He also had his physical therapy and was observed to have delays in his gross motor skills, has absence of mobility skills and

increased plasticity 2 degree. He can move his feet and hands as if he is stretching and is lying on his back most of the time. He would cry out loud to get the attention of his caregiver. He is observed to be asleep most of the time.

April Joy – Asian girl born 4/07 who was voluntarily surrendered. She was born healthy and with no physical deformities noted. At 8 months old, it was noted that she could rarely move her right extremities. She could not sit on her own and can only turn to side and vice versa. April Joy was submitted for Cranial Ultrasound and results revealed Global Developmental Delay, etiology to be determined Probable Cerebral Palsy. She is continuing her rehabilitation to prevent contracture and to be able to sit and walk. April Joy has a normal sleeping pattern. She would still fall when held in sitting position and she loves to be in crawling position. April Joy can sway her body whenever she hears music playing. April Joy is observed to have a happy disposition.

John Levy – Asian boy born 7/04 – an abandoned child, John Levy is assessed to have Developmental Language Disorder, over-all IQ score in the slow learner category, and his right ear has Borderline normal hearing while his left ear is within the normal hearing range. He is in kindergarten. He is cheerful and can converse with the visitors of the center. He is confident in performing and likes to sing and dance. Levy can memorize songs and poems with action and can say the alphabet but cannot recognize the letters. He can play with the other children but is observed to be slow in running. In his fine motor skills, he still cannot control his finger muscles and cannot create recognizable objects when painting or drawing.

Francis – Asian boy born 08/95; Francis is a smart, respectful and happy child, inquisitive and observant, always interested in learning different things, able to pick up ideas easily. He also has the potential to become a leader and assumes responsibility as a big brother to the younger children at the institution. He is sweet and has improved a lot in terms of relationship with others. Francis also regularly attends Sunday school and would sometimes lead in praying and singing praise during devotion. He likes and excels in sports most of the time. He is also good in singing, dancing, playing the guitar and percussions.

Ramsey – Asian boy born 9/06; assessed with mental retardation, weighs very low and looks small for his age. He now can walk and run, lift and move his body easily, and understand instructions. Ramsey is a friendly child a loves to be hugged and cuddled. He likes to play at the playground with older children but sometimes gets easily irritated when someone gets hold of his toys. He would cry and throw tantrums but can easily be pacified when given attention. He can follow counting numbers from one to ten and in reciting the alphabet.

Contact the Indiana office of Hand In Hand for more information on any of these children.

TWO MIDWEST AREA CHINESE CULTURE CLUBS

Many of our families like to make connections with culture clubs in their area in order to help their children learn more about the country of their birth, its peoples and customs, language, traditions and foods. We are frequently asked for contact information. Here is the link to one in Fort Wayne, Indiana: <http://fortwaynechinese.org/index.html>. And here is the information for one in Chicago, Illinois: Chicago Chinese Cultural Institute, Inc., c/o Chinese Cultural Bookstore, 2145B S. China Place, 2nd Floor, Chicago, IL 60616; Tel: 312-842-1988, Fax: 312-275-7133; info@chicagocci.com or www.chicagocci.com We are delighted to see that the Chicago group helps support Half the Sky Foundation, a non-profit that assist Chinese orphans and children with special needs.

BOOK REVIEWS

Brothers and Sisters in Adoption:

Helping Children Navigate Relationships When New Kids Join the Family

This book by Arleta James was recently named “Best 2009 Book in the Field of Psychology: by Independent Book Publishers Association. It is published by Perspectives Press, a publishing company devoted solely to books related to adoption and infertility. *Brothers and Sisters in Adoption* tells it like it is when families with children already in the home add a child or two who have come from an institution, multiple foster care settings, or situations of abuse or

neglect. Beyond the truth telling, Arleta also offers practical advice for how to help the “new” and the “old” children and their parents develop realistic expectations and build healthy family relationships. The book is being offered at 50% off during the month of June. To read more or order the book, go to www.perspectivespress.com .

The Connected Child

Parents who are trying to raise their children according to Biblical principles may enjoy this free study guide created by Dr. Karyn Purvis and Michael and Amy Monroe to help illuminate the principles detailed in Dr. Purvis’ book, *The Connected Child*. The study guide is designed to help adoptive and foster parents better understand how to build strong and lasting connections with their children, and is ideal for use in small groups as well as by individuals or couples. Visit www.empoweredtoconnect.org to download and print the entire study guide or chapter-by-chapter. There is no charge for the download, but they do ask that you let other adoptive and foster parents know about it if you like it.

UPCOMING HAND IN HAND EVENTS IN INDIANA

Free Orientation on International Adoption: Wednesday, June 23, 2010 at 7 PM – St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, 210 N. Orange St., Albion, Indiana. RSVP to 260-636-3566.

Saturday Classes: Day 4 – Saturday, June 19, 2010: Days 2 and 3 will be on dates to be determined in September and October, 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.

BENEFIT BY REFERRING A FAMILY TO HAND IN HAND

We all know the importance of personal referrals when it comes to decisions like, “Which adoption agency should I choose?” We get frequent inquiries from people who say they were referred to us by another family that used Hand In Hand. As of May 1, 2010, you can be one of those families and benefit yourself. 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.

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.