

**HAND IN HAND INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS**  
**November, 2009**

**COUNTRY UPDATES**

**China** – The China Center of Adoption Affairs has most recently matched families with log-in dates of March 28, 2006. (Though we can report on where the China Center of Adoption Affairs is at in terms of their most recent matches, 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. Families already in process in China can do this program, as well as brand new families.

**Guatemala** – The revisions to Guatemalan adoption law and procedure have not been finalized, so this program continues to be on hold.

**Haiti** –Haiti is the poorest nation in the western hemisphere. People are literally starving to death (every hour, one child in Haiti dies of starvation) and living in conditions unfathomable to us. Roughly one-third of Haitian children are chronically malnourished. Less than 10 percent of the Haitian population has access to electricity. There is no government infrastructure and very little hope. There are one million orphans in Haiti, but only 200 to 300 are adopted each year by Americans. Could you adopt one of these needy children?

**Pakistan** – We continue to develop this program to place Christian children from babies to teens. Contact us for more information

**Philippines** – See the article elsewhere in this newsletter regarding new requirements for families who wish to apply to the 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.

**Russia** – Families are needed for older children as well as children between 18 and 36 months old.

**Ukraine** – Ukraine is open for applications from families wanting to adopt a child who is six years old or older.

**SERVING OUR ARIZONA FAMILIES**

Effective October 25, 2009, Hand In Hand has partnered with **Building Arizona Families** to provide services to our Arizona families. While Hand In Hand will continue to coordinate our Russia and Ukraine programs with staff based in Arizona, the other local services for Arizona families will be accomplished through this partnering with Building Arizona Families. Vickie Truelove, in our Indiana office of Hand In Hand, will continue to oversee the China and Philippine programs, Karin Link in our Minnesota office of Hand In Hand will continue to oversee the Haitian programs, and MaryLee Lane in our Florida office will continue to oversee the new Pakistan program.

Building Arizona Families is a Hague-accredited, non-profit adoption agency in Surprise, Arizona with five years of service and experience with domestic and international

adoptions for Arizona families. Like most of the Hand In Hand staff, many of the staff members at Building Arizona Families have personal as well as professional adoption experience. Additionally, Hand In Hand and Building Arizona Families share the same philosophies of providing a full range of services for adoptive families and for being there for families from the time they make the decision to adopt until their children are grown to adulthood and beyond. Check their website at [www.buildingarizonafamilies.com](http://www.buildingarizonafamilies.com).

### **HEAR THE AUTHOR OF “SLEEPLESS IN AMERICA”**

Several months ago we printed some articles about how to help your adopted child sleep at night. The November 4<sup>th</sup> [Creating a Family](http://www.CreatingaFamily.org) radio show is on this topic. If you miss the show, you can go to the website and listen to it. Here is the description: “On this Wednesday’s show we will be talking about getting our kids to sleep and keeping them there with one of my favorite parenting authors, Mary Sheedy Kurcinka, author of *Raising Your Spirited Child* and her new book *Sleepless in America*. We’ll be tackling all the tough questions: cry it out vs. no cry, the family bed, when to give up the nap, and more. Send your questions to [dawn@creatingafamily.org](mailto:dawn@creatingafamily.org). You can listen or download the show at the radio page of [www.CreatingaFamily.org](http://www.CreatingaFamily.org).”

### **CHINA TRAVEL INFORMATION**

*If you are adopting from China and have not yet checked out this website, now is the time to do so. It is written by a family who adopted from China.*

[www.weninchina.com](http://www.weninchina.com) continues to add features of interest to adoptive families waiting for travel dates, those "on the road", and those who have returned that want to learn more about their child's birth country. Four new articles were posted this weekend, bringing our total count of essays up to 52:

- \* [H1N1/ "Swine Flu"](#) – My daughter and I have just finished our bouts with this virus, and it certainly packs a wallop! We talk about not just how to avoid it and how to deal with it should it strike, but also why Asian governments are particularly concerned.
- \* Another unfortunate family experience from this summer leads us to an essay about international [flight delays](#) and what to do in those situations.
- \* Packing for trips we've taken with our daughter this year led us to re-examine our 'suitcase strategies' used on the adoption voyage. We've posted our take on the [packing checklist](#) - for families to use as a starting point. Every child and every family is different, and no single list could ever cover every family's needs.
- \* Finally, we offer a quick look around Japan's capital for those families considering a [Tokyo stopover](#) on their way to China.

### **A FREE TWO-HOUR EDUCATION EVENT -**

#### **“Sharing the Story with Children and Others –**

#### **Developing Strategies for Making "Adoption Talk" Easy, Informative, and Safe”**

Guest Speaker Tara VanderWoude with Bethany Christian Services will be leading a discussion on sharing the stories of adoption. This is a free event sponsored by Hope to Orphans Ministry. It will be held on Thursday, November 19th from 6-8pm in Room 90 at The Chapel, 2505 W. Hamilton Rd., Fort Wayne, Indiana 46814. (No child care will be provided.) Contact Anna Bogdon with any questions - 260-704-0829. Tara VanderWoude works as an Adoption Specialist Social Worker for Bethany Christian Services, assisting

and supporting families throughout their journeys to adopt children both from the domestic and intercountry adoption programs. VanderWoude presents education meetings on many adoption-related topics to both prospective and current adoptive parents, including presenting at several adoption conferences and culture camps. She has traveled to Korea as a volunteer with The Ties Program, an adoptive family homeland journey organization and sits on the Board of Directors for Korean Focus-Indiana. VanderWoude regularly gives of her time in the adoptive family community. VanderWoude, who is both a Korean-born adoptee and an adoptive mother, lives with her husband and two children in Indianapolis.

### **WHAT KIND OF CHILD WILL I ADOPT?**

Do you have ten minutes to spare? This video clip about special needs adoption is from [Love Without Boundaries](#), an excellent organization that advocates for the needs of waiting children. <http://media.causes.com/558094> We think you will be inspired by it! If after you watch it, you want to reconsider the kind of child you can adopt, just let us know.

### **NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR FUTURE APPLICANTS TO THE PHILIPPINES**

*Following are the new requirements for who may adopt from the Philippines, as set forth by the Inter-Country Adoption Board of the country. If your dossier is already there or you have already applied with Hand In Hand and started work on your dossier, you are exempt from these new requirements and procedures. All future applicants will need to meet them though.*

After careful deliberations, the Inter-Country Adoption Board (ICAB) has come up with the list of new requirements for Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs) with medical and psychological concerns. Effective November 1, 2009, foreign adoption agencies should no longer accept families for the Philippine program who have the following medical and psychological issues as they will no longer be accepted by ICAB:

List of unacceptable medical issues:

1. Diabetes Mellitus
2. Obese (BMI of PAPs should be 35 and below)
3. Cancer (or cancer history)
4. Kidney transplant and any major transplant (heart, lung, liver)
5. Pacemaker/stroke/myocardial infarction
6. Multiple sclerosis and other degenerative muscular disorder
7. Autoimmune disorders
8. Risk factors that will impede care for the child (e.g. blind, deaf, wheelchair bound)
9. Hepatitis C

List of unacceptable psychological issues:

1. Psychiatric disorders
2. Mood disorders/major depressive disorders
3. Anxiety disorders
4. Substance use disorders
5. Sexual disorders

ICAB requires that all applicants to be adoptive parents to a Filipino child seek a full psychological evaluation from a competent practitioner. *(Please contact any Hand In Hand office for the full description of this assessment.)*...ICAB will be expecting a more comprehensive psychological and medical assessment for PAPs who intend to adopt a regular child from the Philippines. PAPs seeking a relative or a special needs child will be assessed on a case to case basis.

Very truly yours,  
Bernadette B. Abejo  
Executive Director, ICAB

### **UPCOMING HAND IN HAND EVENTS IN INDIANA**

Next Orientation: Monday, November 23, 2009 – 7-9 PM, Dupont Branch Library, Fort Wayne, IN – Please RSVP at 260-636-3566 or [hihiadopt@verizon.net](mailto:hihiadopt@verizon.net) (If you are interested in adopting but cannot attend an orientation, please call us to set up a free consultation in our office.)

Saturday Classes: Day 2 – Saturday, November 14, 2009; Day 3 – Saturday, January 23, 2010; Day 4 – Saturday, February 20, 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 March, 2010.

### **ADOPTION CELEBRATION**

November is National Adoption Awareness Month and once again, STAR 88.3's Melissa Montana is hosting the annual "Adoption Celebration", **Sunday November 8th** at Life Bridge Church on Corbin Road, Fort Wayne, Indiana. This is a FREE event and it starts at 6pm. If adoption is a part of your family, come celebrate with the other families. If you've ever considered adoption, you'll have a chance to talk to several agencies that will be on location.

### **FILIPINO CULTURAL EVENTS**

If you live in a community with a significant Filipino population, they have most likely formed a culture club to provide opportunities to get together, celebrate customs from their homeland, and teach their children about their heritage. These groups love to have adoptive families join them. You get the added benefit of making new friends, enjoying excellent food, and developing “cultural role models” for your children. Ask any Filipino friend or acquaintance for information about such a group. Here are two events in the Fort Wayne, Indiana area:

Saturday, November 14 - Thanksgiving get-together – 6 PM at the Franke Park Pavilion on the grounds of the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo – bring a dish to share and prepare to be entertained

Saturday, December 5 – Christmas Party 6 PM at the Franke Park Pavilion on the grounds of the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo – bring a dish to share – there will be special entertainment

## **NEW PROCEDURES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS ADOPTION CASES IN CHINA**

If you are adopting a child with special needs from China, please be advised that the US Consulate in Guangzhou, China has instituted a new requirement. Your immigration approval (I-171H or I-797C) must include the special need of the child you are planning to adopt. If it does not, then an amended I-171H or I-1797-C must be obtained and forwarded to the US Consulate in Guangzhou prior to your trip. Failure to accomplish this could result in a family having an unexpected, very long stay in China. Contact Hand In Hand if you need an amendment and it has not already been initiated.

## **ADVENTURE CAMP FOR CHINESE-AMERICAN TEENAGERS**

The American Adventure Camp is being offered to teenagers in China as well as Chinese American (adopted and biological) teens. This is a great opportunity to meet other teens from China and create life-long friendships. Your teenager can attend any one, two, or all three weeks offered in this summer camp! Please check out the details at [www.ocdf.org/camps](http://www.ocdf.org/camps).

Week #1: Learn about American history and culture as you explore the sites in Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and New York City. Families may elect to join their teen and enjoy the sightseeing together for this week only.

Week #2: Head up to Hidden Valley Camp in Maine and enjoy many outdoor camping activities, including hiking at Acadia National Park, boating, water sports, lobster fishing and cooking, arts and crafts, and berry picking.

Week #3: Stay an extra week at Hidden Valley Camp for their Teen Leadership program to learn more about environmental responsibility and community service.

This program is designed for kids ages 12-16, but older teens can join the camp program as a peer counselor. There are online brochures available with detailed itineraries and prices at [www.ocdf.org/camps](http://www.ocdf.org/camps). Please visit our website and feel free to contact Dr. Jane Liedtke with further questions at [jane@ocdf.org](mailto:jane@ocdf.org).

## **Help Requested for a Guatemalan Mission Trip**

Dear Friends and Family,

As many of you already know Carmen and I adopted our incredibly wonderful daughter from Guatemala. During our adoption process we were fortunately given the option to foster Tenley and live in Guatemala during part of our adoption. This was not only adventuresome, educational and life changing but it gave us the chance to connect with a beautiful people. These people not only befriended and welcomed us with open arms into their country and culture but they became family. This new family, however, is from a third world country that is in desperate need of economic and governmental reform. Put simply, they are economically poor but rich in life and family. I will be traveling again to the Panajachel region near Lake Atitlan, January 1-10, 2010 with DoCares International and Rocky Vista University. During my trip in January '09, we were able to provide medical care to almost 1000 people. By my second night of the '09 mission I was on the phone with Carmen weeping with emotion because it is so hard to see such a loving people suffer so much with pain and illness. With your contribution from last year I was able to personally help an 8 year old girl buy medication and teach her how to use it at home. The medicine supply was only for a few short months.....I hope to check in on her health during this next trip.

This trip is what they call "self supported", meaning that each participating member pays for 100% of their travel/food to/from and while in country. While in country we do everything we can to insure every penny is pinched and the rest is directed towards our mission of medically helping the poor and needy people of Guatemala. We will travel to over 8 remote villages helping approximately 125 people in each village. As you can imagine, sleeping in remote Mayan villages is no "vacation" but seeing the smiling faces of gratitude and getting the chance to serve makes the sacrifices all worth it and truly a blessing.

So, with that being said, I'd like to ask you to sponsor me on this much needed endeavor by making a small monetary contribution. Any amount big or small would be greatly appreciate and helps the people immensely. CNN, just last week, reported that Guatemala is now the most malnourished country in the Americas. I can not plead with you enough, to please help those less fortunate souls in Guatemala. Tenley thanks you, I thank you and the kind and loving people of Guatemala thank you. If you are unable to help financially, then please support me with your thoughts and prayers while I'm in country and while I prepare to travel to what I consider MY "second" country that I've adopted and love dearly.

God Bless,  
Scott Vinas

Please mail contributions to: Scott Vinas, 70 Audrey Circle, Breckenridge, CO. 80424

**CALLING ON ENTERTAINERS**  
**FOR THE HAND IN HAND HOLIDAY PARTY**

The Indiana party will be on Saturday, December 12 from 4-7 PM at Central Noble High School in Albion, Indiana. We will have a carry-in dinner and entertainment. For the entertainment this year, we are calling on adoptive families and children! What is your special talent? We would like a variety of talents, so contact us and tell us what you would like to do – sing, dance, play an instrument, recite a poem, or maybe even something more spectacular!

**UPDATE ON “NON-RECURRING ADOPTION EXPENSE”**

For those Indiana families who are in the process of adopting older children or ones with special needs, please know that per new state rules internationally adopted children no longer qualify for the Non-recurring Adoption Expense.

**POLICY ON POST ADOPTION SEARCHING**

As of October 15, 2009 the policy of the Philippine government regarding birth family searches is as follows:

Dear Partners:

In view of the increasing number of requests from young adoptees and from adoptive parents who would like to search and meet the birth family of their adoptive child, the Board has recently issued a policy on the matter.

Since emotional maturity of the adoptee should be a major consideration in the search and reunion process, the appropriate age for an adoptee to initiate the search and

reunion shall be the age of majority applicable under the laws of the Receiving Countries. Thus, only an adult adoptee either 18 or 21 years old will be permitted to pursue their intention to search and meet with their birth family.

The requests for search and reunion from adoptive parents will only be considered if there is a written consent from the adult adoptees.

Thank you for your continued cooperation.

Very truly yours,

**BERNADETTE B. ABEJO**

Executive Director

### **CHILDREN WHO NEED FAMILIES**

We have information on many individual children and sibling groups who need forever families. If you want to see the complete list, contact us at [hihiadopt@verizon.net](mailto:hihiadopt@verizon.net) and we will email it to you.

### **PLEASE HELP US HELP MORE CHILDREN**

If you are already home with your child, please remember the conditions in the country of your child's birth and the faces of the children in that orphanage. A donation to Hand In Hand will allow us to do more on behalf of those children who wait and hope for a family of their own. Donations are tax-deductible and can be sent to: MaryLee Lane, Executive Director, Hand In Hand, 9520 SW 9 Terrace, Ocala, FL 34476.

### **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.