

HAND IN HAND INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS
October, 2009

Help Typhoon-Stricken Orphanages

The worst typhoon in 40 years hit the Philippines this past week, leaving hundreds dead and three Manila-area orphanages badly damaged, while another typhoon threatens to land today. **Hospicio de San Jose** directress, Sister Corrie Evidente, shared the following: "Saturday and Sunday was really a nightmare for us.....no wonder I got fever last night and high blood pressure but anyway I am feeling better today and able to open this email. For us here in Hospicio, the flood on the first floor was until my armpit level. At around 5 PM of Saturday, water was above kneel level so we had to evacuate the babies and the children who are all housed on the first floor to whatever vacant rooms there were on the 2nd floor for the kids and in the 3rd floor conference room for the babies and pre-schoolers. Then at 2 AM when water got higher all our male personnel transferred the elderly to the lobby area of our dormitories in the 2nd and 3rd floors. For us, Sisters we were also stranded in the 2nd floor except for some of us who had to wade in the muddy waters to mobilize things around. A lot of furniture and some documents in our offices were damaged. The flood waters were only able to subside when electricity was returned around noon of Sunday because our flood control pumps were able to work. But now, we're still cleaning up the debris and the mud brought about by the flood and drying up some documents and furniture that we can still save, if ever. Some of our stocks in the stock room were also damaged by the flood. It is a good thing that we were able to save our rice but diapers of children and elderly were all soaked. We just pray that no one will get sick especially among those who had to wade to save lives. We were faced with the danger of water snakes and the urine of rats which were all so deadly but thanks be to God we're still okay. The children and elderly were all prohibited to go down and wade on the waters. Thanks so much for your concern."

Heart of Mary Villa directress, Sister Lorenz reported the following: "Water rose over eight feet and the Nursery, chapel, and the first floor of both the Maternity Home and the convent, where the offices are, were under water. Thank GOD, the babies, the women, the staff, and the Sisters were not caught by the flash flood. All that the caregivers could take along were a few cans of milk and some packs of disposable diapers. One side of the concrete wall of H MV collapsed because of the pressure of the flood. The glass doors of the Nursery were broken and everything was destroyed in the four buildings. The whole place is a mess, covered with mud. The babies are all together in one room on the second floor of the Maternity Home; very uncomfortable, to say the least. They could hardly have straight sleep as they used to; it is very warm and mosquitoes abound. The caregivers are almost on a twenty-four-hour-duty because the babies keep on crying. Other staff members, including us Sisters, help out in taking care of the babies. We need help."

The Inter-country Adoption Board reports that **House of Refuge** was also particularly hard-hit.

Hand In Hand is collecting donations to assist these orphanages to rebuild and restock. Can you help? Send your tax-deductible donation to MaryLee Lane at Hand In Hand, 9520 SW 9 Terrace, Ocala, FL 34476. Make the check payable to "Hand In Hand" and specify "typhoon relief" in the memo line. If you wish to designate a particular orphanage, you may.

COUNTRY UPDATES

China – The China Center of Adoption Affairs has most recently matched families with log-in dates of March 24, 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 are excited about this new program. The first families have been matched and expect to travel in the next few months. We can take five new applications per month.

Philippines – Though matching is not done in order, the longest waiting current families are those approved in the Philippines in July, 2008. There is a Philippine government moratorium in place at present for any new applications for children up to two years of age. Applications for children over two are still being accepted. (The purpose of the moratorium is the country doesn't want any one family to wait an inordinate amount of time for a match. By not taking more applications for young children at this time, they can keep the match time to a more reasonable period.)

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.

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 and we will email it to you. Following are just a few of the children who wait:

Cliff – this 6-year-old Asian boy has cerebral palsy and vision loss in both eyes; he cannot talk but can stand for short periods of time; he is dependent on someone for all his needs; he loves affection and cuddling from the staff

Marie – is a 10-year-old Asian girl who has been in care since about age 4; she is well-behaved, polite, helps around her home, apologizes if she does something wrong, and enjoys singing and dancing; she really wants an adoptive family but fears she will never get one

Rene is a 14-year-old Asian boy who was in family care for most of his life, but this is no longer a possibility for him; he does well at school and is a good boy; he experienced abuse in the past and has had therapy which has helped him cope with it

Jonah is an 11-year-old Asian girl with cerebral palsy who is dependent upon adults for all her basic needs Two brothers – 14 and 10 years old – these two brothers have had a rough life; they are well cared for now in the orphanage but neither attends school because they do not find it meaningful for them; a family that could help them find their own niche in life and possibly pursue alternate educational opportunities would be best.

One-year-old boy – this Caucasian child is described as follows; he is a “boy/girl”; he has boy's hormones. He will be operated and will be a boy, because he was tested for hormones and he is a boy having something additional of a girl's system. The child will be operated by 3 years old.

Three siblings – they are healthy Caucasian children - a boy about 4, a two-year-old girl, and a one-year-old boy

Daniil – this 10-month-old Caucasian boy has been diagnosed with iron deficiency, thymus hyperplasia, benign intracranial hypertension, atrial septum defect, and delay in weight and length

HOMELAND TOURS

As our children get older, they begin to ask many questions about their homeland and about the circumstances of their adoption. We as adoptive parents do our best to answer them, educate them, and assure them. One way to truly assist them in coming to grips with the reality of their situation is with a trip back to the country of their birth. Hand In Hand has organized such trips for children adopted from the Philippines (*contact us to participate in the trip planned for June, 2010*), accompanied families on a Nativeland Trip to Thailand, and advised many families making these trips on their own. To read all the reasons you should consider such a trip, see this article from Adoptive Families Magazine:

http://www.adoptivefamilytravel.com/news_resources.asp#77

HAVE YOU COMPLETED YOUR PRE-ADOPTION TRAINING REQUIREMENTS?

Each adoptive family has requirements for pre-adoption training that they must complete prior to their adoption. If you live in a state where Hand In Hand has an office, then we provide classes which meet the requirements. It is up to you to access them when they are offered. If you live in a different state, then there are other options for completing this requirement, e.g. classes offered by your home study agency, on-line courses, or alternative plans that you and your adoption coordinator and agency agree upon as long as they meet state and federal minimum guidelines. If you put off completion of this requirement, you may cause a delay in the placement of a child into your family. For example, those of you completing an adoption under Hague Convention guidelines will need to file a Form I-800 when the foreign government officially matches you to a child; one of the supporting documents that must be filed with the I-800 is proof of your completion of your required training. Please talk to your adoption coordinator if you have questions.

UPCOMING HAND IN HAND EVENTS IN INDIANA

Next Orientation: Wednesday, October 21, 2009 – 7:00 PM – St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 210 N. Orange St., Albion, IN (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: Saturday, October 17, 2009 – 8:30AM to 4:00 PM

ATTENTION: INDIANA FAMILIES WORKING ON A SECOND OR SUBSEQUENT ADOPTION

Remember that you must attend one session of the "Class for Repeat Families" as noted in the article above. This class is only held three times per year, so don't miss your opportunity. If your second adoption is in a Hague Convention country (e.g. China or the Philippines) you must have the class completed by the time we file your I-800 form with Immigration, i.e. before the respective foreign government formally matches you to a child. If you are adopting from a non-Hague country, the class must be completed before you bring your child home.

ADOPTION CELEBRATION

Make plans now to attend this annual event in Fort Wayne, Indiana on Sunday, November 8, 2009 at 6 PM.

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. 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.

SOMEONE MISSING THE NEWSLETTER?

Do you know someone who is not receiving the newsletter but might like to be? Such as a Hand In Hand family from years ago? If so, please forward this one to them and invite them to send us an email requesting to be added to the list. Thank you for helping us keep in touch with families who may not have had email when they first worked with Hand In Hand.

NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

November is National Adoption Month. You can watch your favorite adoption websites, magazines, support groups, etc. for ideas on how to celebrate it in your family. Here are a few ways:

- Have a dinner at an ethnic restaurant to celebrate what adoption has meant for your family

- Make a donation to an orphanage in honor of the child you adopted
- Create some new pages for your child's lifebook which show events of the past year
 - Ask your child if there are any adoption-related questions he has been pondering that you can discuss together
- Ask your priest or pastor to add adoptive families and children waiting to be adopted to the prayer list for the month
- Have your child write a letter to her birth family describing her thoughts and feelings about having been adopted, even if it is something that will never be mailed
- Attend an adoption-related function like the one described elsewhere in this newsletter

SERVICES HAND IN HAND CAN PROVIDE

Are you planning to adopt from a country where Hand In Hand does not work? Even so, we can still assist you. We are able to provide home studies, post placement services, and pre-adoption training for families who live in any state where we have an office (AZ, CO, FL, IN, and MN). Just contact us and tell us what you need and we will put together the services for you. If your adoption is from a Hague country and your Primary Provider is in a different state than your state of residence, we are also able to assist you as a Supervised Provider.

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.

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, hula hoop, juggle, do a magic trick, acrobatics, or maybe even something more spectacular!

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.