

HAND IN HAND INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS SEPTEMBER, 2011 NEWSLETTER

COUNTRY UPDATES

China – The China Center of Adoption Affairs has most recently matched families with log-in dates of July 14, 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.

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

[alert_notice_type=notices&alert_notice_file=china_1](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 last 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.

CHINA HOME STUDY AND POST PLACEMENT CHANGES THAT ARE NOW IN EFFECT

Attention: China Families in Process:

As was reported in the April, 2011 Hand In Hand newsletter, the China Center for Children's Welfare and Adoption (formerly known as the China Center of Adoption Affairs) has initiated new requirements for home studies and post placement. If you have not completed a dossier yet or will not have one to China before October 1, 2011, then the new rules for home study will apply to you. (If you are not already familiar with these new requirements that pertain to psychological evaluations and reference letters, please contact us.)

If your dossier is either not yet completed or is in China but you have not received permission to travel to receive your child by now, then the new rules for post placement will apply to you. Those rules increase the number of post placement visits to six (6). Whereas the post placement period previously ended with the visit at one year after arrival, there now must also be visits and reports by a licensed social worker at two years, three years and five years after arrival.

For those families who signed an "In-State China Fee Agreement," this increase in the number of post placement visits is unfortunately not already planned for in the fee agreement you signed. Our hope is always that we will never have to amend fees while a family is in process. However, we understand that the countries that place children sometimes feel the need to make changes that they believe are in the best interest of families and children and we, as a Hague-accredited agency must comply with them in order to be able to keep our Hague accreditation and our accreditation by the foreign central authorities with whom we work, such as the China Center for Children's Welfare and Adoption. Therefore, you will be receiving a Fee Agreement Addendum to add in those three additional visits and reports.

For those families who signed an "Out-of-State China Fee Agreement", you will have to talk to your home study agency about adding in three more post placement visits to the services they will provide after you are home.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

A SURVEY ON HOW CHINESE ADOPTEES FORM THEIR ETHNIC IDENTITY

My name is Alexa Ing Stern and I am an undergraduate student at Harvard College studying Sociology. I spent the summer after my freshman year living and working at an orphanage in Luoyang, China. I have also been heavily involved with Harvard China Care, a student organization that raises funds to support medical procedures for Chinese orphans and runs programs for families who have adopted from China. Through these experiences, I have become very interested in the experiences of these children who come from China and join American families. For my Senior Thesis, I will be researching how Chinese adoptees form their ethnic identity, and explore what factors influence this identity formation. I would be very grateful if you could fill out this short online survey:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/viewform?formkey=dGQ0Yml0QjNKUFVLOXNSeWJVb0NORnc6MQ>

Any adult who has adopted a child from China is eligible to fill out the survey. The only exception is in cases where your spouse has already filled out the survey; in these cases, please do not fill out the survey again. If you have any friends, family members, or acquaintances that are eligible to fill out the survey, I would greatly appreciate you passing this message on. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at astern12@college.harvard.edu or (339) 227-9986. Sincerely, Alexa Ing Stern

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

**ADOPTIVE FAMILIES CIRCLE CAN HELP YOU FIND A SUPPORT GROUP
IN YOUR AREA**

Hoping to connect with adoptive families in your area? Right now discussions are happening in [Pittsburgh](#), [Jacksonville](#), [Amarillo](#), and more! Just click on the "My Location" link in the AdoptiveFamiliesCircle [adoption groups menu](#) to find and connect with hopeful parents and adoptive families in your area. Don't see a group for your state or country? Send us an [e-mail requesting a group](#). You can also use our new local directories feature to find information on state-specific adoption laws and resources. Head to the upper left-hand corner of [AdoptiveFamiliesCircle.com](#) for a drop-down menu of resources in your area!

POPULAR CHINA TRAVEL INFORMATION WEBSITE FOR ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

[weninchina.com](#) helps adoption agencies provide families preparing to journey to China "fill in the gaps" that traditional guidebooks don't cover. We are always adding interesting, informative features geared to families waiting for travel dates, those "on the road", and those who have returned wanting to learn more about their child's birth country.

Last month we posted four very popular articles:

* [Toilets](#) - we explain the "sitty vs. squatty" debate, explain why its unlikely travelers will encounter a squat toilet, show how to use one just in case, and offer a list of to-dos and not-to-dos

* [Water](#) - an explanation what the problems are with the water supply, what travelers can and cannot do with tap water, how to use the kettles in hotel rooms, and where to find good, inexpensive bottled water for daily use

* [Dim Sum](#) - an historical overview of this meal, the endless variety it offers, and how to enjoy the dining experience in China and back home

* [Dragon Boat Festival](#) - reviewing the stories and activities around this traditional early-summer holiday

Since then we have added two additional, high-interest articles (bringing our total to 80!):

* [Laundry](#) - packing is always a challenge for long trips, especially when taking kids. Traveling lightly means having to clean clothes on the road - we show the three main options for families in China, give cost guidelines, and list tips for best results when washing clothing in one's hotel room

* [Mid-Autumn Festival](#) - with the full moon in September comes this end-of-summer celebration. North American families can easily integrate the traditions of this holiday - we explain how, and we tell the complicated 4,000+ year-old tale behind it. Also, we show what mooncakes are, the roles they play, and where to get them.

Your visits, feedback, and recommendations are always appreciated. Thanks for helping to spread the word about this resource!

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OUR JOURNEY TO PAULA

Here is a letter from Noble, a bright and compassionate 14-year-old young man who traveled with his parents and grandmother to the Philippines to bring home his new 13-year-old sister, Paula. It is being reprinted here with permission from his family.

Greetings friends and family!! Finally...I would like to thank you and share with you the amazing opportunity to bring home my new sister Paula! I really had no idea what to expect going to the Philippines and even more what to expect meeting my new 13 year old sister. When we first arrived, Paula was very shy and hiding behind a sign so we couldn't see her. We knew she was glad, but all this attention had her a little in the spotlight. A well-deserved spotlight. The road here was long for us but even longer for her. By day number 2 we started looking like a brother and sister and by the

time day number 3 got there, we were family. When we first arrived at the orphanage I connected almost immediately with a 4 year old boy named Jovan. Just 1 year ago Jovan was on the brink of death because of malnutrition and abuse beyond what you would believe. He clung to me in a way that touched my heart forever. I miss him now. He cried so much when I left the last day. I spent most of the three days there teaching the kids soccer and playing on the swing sets. Let me say here before you read further, if I could have I would have brought Jovan home. I am 14 and there's paperwork! That puts you the reader in a vulnerable position. There are a lot of great kids there just wanting a family to love them.

The last night there mom and dad sponsored a Pig Roast which was a huge deal for the kids in the orphanage. After the Pig Roast Paula surprised mom and dad with a special performance she produced, directed and choreographed. Paula played the flute, piano, guitar and danced. She is incredibly talented in music as you will find out I'm sure. After the music production Paula moved a podium to the front of the room. We were on the front row. The lights got turned down and a video slide show of the last 13 years played on the screen. All the special times we missed in a three minute slide show. The light focused on the podium now and Paula read a letter titled "A Letter to My Family". It was an incredible moment for each of us. We left the next day for the last time. It was a crying fest. We loved on these kids and they loved us back for 3 days. Saying good bye was the last thing any of us wanted to do.

We went back to our hotel and on the roof was a roller coaster and zip line. Dad said he didn't trust their maintenance records but we went anyway. Amy from the Children's Shelter of Cebu (CSC) came with us. AWESOME. The next day Grandma treated for 3 days and 2 nights at Villa Escudero north of Manila. Authentic in every way. It was a post card resort that was cool. The cottages looked like Tahitian bamboo huts and the restaurant was unbelievable. There was a waterfall they used to generate electricity and in the middle of this jungle-like setting was a restaurant. We ate our meals with our feet in the water. We were serenaded each night by roaming musicians with ukuleles. We boated, we swam, we canoed on bamboo rafts. I even climbed a coconut tree and ate fresh coconut with dad. We did a million unbelievable things and saw just as many. Everywhere we went people kept saying how lucky we were to be Americans. If you saw this place you would say the same. Naked people sleeping with their naked children in the streets. The great paradox of this letter is the great time I had and the unreal time they have every day of life. The average wage per day is less than \$10 and poverty and hopelessness are all around you. The people of this country have incredible spirit even though they know tomorrow will be the same. This trip was heart changing and I hope to spread the message of hope for these orphans - the hope that people who read this will go write their own chapter or help someone who's trying to adopt. You will be amazed at all the incredible kids who want a family like yours. Thanks for all your support and prayers. God Bless You.

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!

SCHOOL IS IN SESSION –
WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOUR CHILD SUCCEED

Now that school is in session, it is time to start thinking about how you can help your child's teacher increase his/her understanding of how adoption-related issues may affect your child's adjustment and learning. *Heart of the Matter Seminars* offers a free resource for you, as follows:

Don't miss a timely read in this WHITE PAPER for the adoptive and foster parent community:

"Talking with Teachers"

DOWNLOAD YOUR COPY NOW

SPECIAL FOCUS CHILDREN

These are children from China who are waiting for families:

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.

FREE WEBINAR FROM THE FOUNDER OF THE POST INSTITUTE

Staff at Hand In Hand and several of our families think very highly of the work of Bryan Post with adoptive family issues. Here is an opportunity to learn from him for free this week:

Find out **WHY** your child misbehaves and **WHAT** you can do about it in this dynamic live webinar presentation hosted by Child and Family Expert, Bryan Post.

Here's just a small sample of what you will learn:

- Abolish the anxiety of not knowing why
- Accelerate the healing of trauma and stress
- Achieve the loving relationship you desire
- Adopt a new understanding of severe behavior
- Break debilitating family patterns
- Boost your chances for winning the defiance battle
- Increase the presence of love in your home
- Build a stronger relationship with your child
- And much, much more

Seats are limited Click Here Now

Talk to you on the webinar September 6, 7 or 8, 2011.

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: Tuesday, September 27, 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 22, 2011 (please note that this is a change of date). 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 a \$200 credit toward your next Hand In Hand payment for either your current adoption process or your next adoption through 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 around the world.

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, please 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 SW 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 ADOPTINN 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 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.