

Tree of Life Adoption Center

News from Executive Director, Daniel Stinea

It has been a busy summer for not only our in process families but for the agency. We moved our offices after ten years in the same location. We are grateful to have beautiful new office space that was made specific to our needs and to have ground floor accessibility. However, the move was not without some stressful days as a result of switching our server provider and phone system: our technical team fought a strong battle to get us up and running. Unfortunately, we lost contact with the world for a total of one week. Please accept our apologies if during this transitional time you attempted to contact us.

We are very pleased that we have been recognized as one of the few agencies that will be permitted to continue to work in Kazakhstan. This has been a consuming process and has taken me to Washington to meet with the new head of the Kazakhstan Embassy. We have two families just home with their new children and one preparing to travel. This program continues to be a solid and consistent program for families that have the ability to do the 35 day travel. It is interesting to note that a high number of families that adopt through Tree of Life Adoption Center Kazakhstan program return for a second adoption through Kazakhstan.

It has been an amazing year of change for families who want to add a child through adoption along with change within the world of adoption. The economy, Hague, programs changing and the cost of travel have all affected the process and abilities of all who hope to add a child to their family and the agencies that support those efforts. We are very proud of our families who have found creative means of



Our new office



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finding funding and working to bring their children home in 2008. Our best wishes and appreciation for allowing Tree of Life Adoption Center to assist you. We have a large amount of information that we can provide you about employee matching programs, grants, affording adoption and how to find financial assistance. Please let us know if we can help you in any way.

News from International Program Director, Bianca Marcu;

Our Ethiopia program continues to grow in numbers and we have several families either traveling or preparing to travel this month. This is a wonderful opportunity for families who wish to add an infant, siblings or older children. The children are well cared for and currently the program is very swift to complete. Having a home study is the first step to committing to a specific child from our photo listing. For those families requesting a referral, the dossier must be submitted in the country to begin the process. We look forward to sharing our new children home with you in the months ahead.

News from International Program Coordinator, Kay Montes;

Slowly we are bringing our children home from Guatemala: one by one.....truly it has been an amazing journey and with such highs and lows. We are not through the challenges yet. We have currently been notified that at this time there is no person of authority functioning with the US Embassy: the adjuncticator is in the hospital (undetermined length of time if and when she returns) and Mr. Roma (you all remember the "Mr. Roma" letters?) no longer works in Guatemala. It is another frustration in a long list of delays to bring the children home to their families. All families adopting from Guatemala continue to be affected by the closing of this program: they have and continue to walk a path of challenges: we have five children home this month and we want to thank those parents for their patience, endurance and often rare ability to find light in the darkness. We will share with you as each child comes home.....

Our Bulgarian program is busy: a welcome change following four years of slowdown following this countries acclimation to Hague accreditation. We currently have 28 families in process and received two referrals in September. There are an abundance of children waiting who have been left behind during this time of change. If you believe you have a place in your home for such a little one, please let us know. This is a referral by request program: if we don't place dossiers they cannot give referrals so the numbers will only come up at we present families who wish to add a child from Bulgaria to their family.

My personal gratitude to all parents who are waiting for their children....

2007-2008 Primary Project: Help for Andrey

Over the past several months we shared with you Andrey. This young boy turned 14 on January 31st, 2008. He has been living in an orphanage in Eastern Europe and was relinquished at birth due to his facial deformities. He spent close to a year here in the United States staying with a host family as he underwent several surgeries to repair his cleft lip and pallet.

We have wonderful news to share, as Andrey's surgeries have been completed! Following is an excerpt from an e-mail sent by his host family.

Well, here is Andrey! I can't give you proper words to describe all that we are feeling. Andrey is so happy with his surgeries. We leave for Eastern Europe on October 22nd. Andrey can't wait to see his friends, yet he is sad to leave, as you can imagine. Andrey has made miraculous progress in every area of his life. We thank you all for the endless love, support and prayers on behalf of Andrey and our family and the children of Kushum.

David and Bethann



Welcome Home!

Bill & Susan home from Guatemala with daughter Darma-Maria
Scott and Jessica Frey home from Guatemala with their daughter Josie
Bruce and Connie home from Guatemala with their daughter Isabella
Jared, Penny and sister Tali home from Guatemala with son Luis



Scott and Jessica with Josie



Bruce and Connie with Isabella



Precious Darma Maria



Luis with his mom, dad and sister Tali

Creating a Family Radio Adoption Shows

The internet radio show, *Creating a Family*, is an educational resource for adoptive families covering pre and post adoption issues. The show is hosted by Dawn Davenport, the author of *The Complete Book of International Adoption* (Random House). Previous guests have included Deborah Gray (*Attaching in Adoption*), Sherrie Eldridge (*Twenty Things Adopted Kids Wish Their Adoptive Parents Knew*), Mary Hopkins-Best (*Toddler Adoption: The Weaver's Craft*), Dr. Jane Aronson (international adoption doctor and founder of Worldwide Orphans Foundation), Gregory Keck (*Parenting the Hurt Child*), Dr. Foster Cline (*Love and Logic* and *Can This Child Be Saved*), Elizabeth Pantley (*The No-Cry Sleep Solution*), Dr. Julian Davies (FASD), and many more. The show airs every Wednesday from 12:00 to 1:00 PM Eastern Time and all old shows are still available for listening at the radio page of www.creatingafamily.com or can be downloaded as a podcast from iTunes.

Creating a Family: Talk about Adoption and Infertility is a weekly internet radio show. Half the shows are on adoption topics and half are about infertility. The show is live on Wednesdays from 12:00 to 1:00 Eastern Time and listeners can call or email questions for the guests. All shows are archived and available at the radio page of www.creatingafamily.com. The shows can also be downloaded as a pod cast from itunes and Creating a Family is both the number one adoption podcast and infertility podcast on iTunes.

Upcoming Episodes:

Dec. 5- Twenty Things Adopted Kids Wish Their Adoptive Parents Knew

I will interview Sherrie Eldridge, author of the books *Twenty Things Adopted Kids Wish Their Adoptive Parents Knew* and *Forever Fingerprints*, about the 20 key issues that can potentially damage relationships between adoptees and their families and what parents can do to help.

Jan. 2, 2008 Special issues facing adoptive families

I will interview Dr. Joyce Maguire Pavao, a family therapist specializing in adoptive families and author of the book *The Family of Adoption*. We will discuss how to talk with kids about adoption, how to help our kids feel good about themselves, and how does parenting an adopted child differ from parenting a birth child. Dr. Pavao has over 30 years experience working with families formed through adoption and was adopted herself.

Jan. 23 The Ups and Downs of Adopting a Toddler

I will interview Mary Hopkins-Best, author of *Toddler Adoption: The Weaver's Craft*, about the unique rewards and challenges of adopting a toddler. We will discuss the differences between toddler and infant adoption, how toddlers grieve, and transition tips.

Jan. 30 Health Issues with Internationally Adopted Children

I will interview Dr. Jane Aronson, international adoption doctor and founder of Worldwide Orphans Foundation, about the common health issues found in internationally adopted kids. We'll discuss fetal alcohol syndrome, parasites, AIDS, attachment issues and the typical affects of institutionalization.

Feb. 13 Parenting the Hurt Child/ Attachment 101

I will interview Gregory Keck, author of *Parenting the Hurt Child* and renowned expert in attachment and bonding. We'll talk about warning signs of attachment issues, RAD, and what parents can do.

Feb. 20 Post adoption Depression

I will interview Karen Foli, author of *The Post-Adoption Blues*, about the early transition time for child and parent after an adoption, the signs and symptoms of post-adoption depression, who is at risk, and what works to help the parent and family.

March 12 Parenting with Love and Logic

I will interview Dr. Foster Cline, world renowned child psychiatrist and author of the *Love and Logic* series of books on parenting. These books on raising responsible children are required reading by many agencies.

March 19 Adoption 101

Deb Harder, an adoption social worker, and I will take your questions on all forms of adoption-domestic newborn, foster system and international. We will cover where to begin, how to finance, the adoption tax credit, and the home study. We will generally cover the ins and outs of domestic and international adoption.

March 26 Adopting the Waiting Child

How do you find children in need of homes, what resources are available to help, what is meant by a child with "special needs", and how do you know if it is the right choice for your family? I will interview Martha Osborne, founder of Rainbowkids.com and *The Voice of Adoption Newsletter*, and Merrily Ripley, adoptive mom and founder of *Adoption Advocates International*.

Making the decision to adopt internationally is not always easy. It is natural to question our ability to go through a process that will be so different than anything else we have experienced. If you find yourself questioning whether you are ready for international adoption, following is a good checklist of the qualities that will help you be successful through this process.

How do I know if I am a good candidate for international adoption?

Answer: Ask yourself these questions and be very honest in your answers. If you can answer the majority of the statements below with a YES, you are ready for an international adoption experience.

- I am goal oriented. Once I make up my mind to do something, I almost always accomplish it.
- I feel I handle stressful situations well. I've found ways to reduce my stress level before I "blow up."
- I consider myself to be a patient person in situations that others find trying.
- I have a good sense of humor. It helps me keep things in perspective.
- Differences interest me. I find it rewarding to try new things.
- I like travel, meeting new people, trying different foods, etc.
- Challenges make me determined to succeed, and I do not give up easily.
- When faced with a problem, I become a problem solver. My motto is, "Where there is a will, there is a way."
- My friends, family, and coworkers would say that I am a loyal person.
- I am realistic in my expectations of myself and others.
- When things don't go as I've planned, I can adjust.
- Even though my family and friends sometimes let me down, I can overlook their shortcomings and accept them as they are.
- I am usually an optimistic person. I like to look on the bright side of things.
- I like to do things my way but can accept the fact that some things are out of my control.
- I have a lot of support in my life from family and friends.
- I am proactive. I value the advice of others and seek help when I need it.

Attention: New address for filing I-800A Forms

Please be aware that the address for filing your I-800A forms has changes. All new I-800 forms will now be processed through Chicago, Illinois.

USCIS Changes Procedure for Filing I-800/A Forms

The USCIS has extended its Direct Mail lockbox program to include I-800/A forms. Applicants were previously required to file at a USCIS field office with jurisdiction over their place of residence. The Direct Mail program allows USCIS to process applications more efficiently by eliminating duplicate work, maximizing staff productivity, and introducing better information management tools. **Starting September 25 all I-800/A forms and supplementary documents should be sent to:**

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

P.O. Box 805695

Chicago, IL 60680-4118

This change does not cover I-600/A filings.



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