

To Our Registered China Families:

**Gong hei fat choi!!!! We wish you well as we enter the year of the Tiger!**

We hope that you all had a wonderful holiday season! It's hard to believe that it is 2010 already!! Now that the busyness of the holidays is over, we want to again send out this newsletter to update you on adoption options currently available at our agency. This is especially important as we see the wait to adopt from the China non special needs program continues to grow. While some of you will be content to continue to wait for a proposal, we want to make sure that you are aware of all the options available to you. Some of you may be intending to adopt more than one child, and may want to register with another program while continuing to wait for the China program. Families are now able to register for two countries at the same time. There are of course fees and requirements for each program but we are happy to assist families to provide more opportunities.

**Mark it on your calendar!**

***Jennifer will be attending the Chinese New Years celebration in Vancouver on February 6, 2010 this year and would be pleased to speak with you more about any of these options.***

***Marni and Marlene look forward to Chinese New Years celebrations in the Okanagan and look forward to seeing you all!***

***Please make note that our next Information session will be on March 23, 2010; 7-9PM in Kelowna.*** Please contact our office to register. The last information session was well attended and included a panel of adoptive parents who had adopted from different countries who spoke about their experiences. We hope to have another panel in attendance for the next information session. We would strongly recommend that you attend if at all possible especially if you are considering looking at other adoption options to learn about what other countries may be a good fit for you.

Below are some details on other programs:

**China's Waiting Child Program**

**(Please make sure you read through the testimony from a family who adopted through this program in this newsletter!!!)**

The children placed through this program are primarily between the ages of 18 months and 6 years of age and are of both genders. The children have been identified as having "minor correctable special needs" which makes them ineligible to be placed through China's non special needs program. To date we have placed four children through this program, and the children are doing very well. The wait for this program is much shorter than the non special needs program so we anticipate that some families will want to switch to this program. For families with a Log in date in the non special needs program, the dossier process is abbreviated. Facilitator fees already paid can be applied to this program.

## **Haiti**

We would like to thank all those who have been contacting our agency to learn more about adopting children from Haiti who have been orphaned by the recent earthquake. We apologize that we may not be able to get back to you due to the volume of emails and phone calls to our office. We need to prioritize working with our adoptive families who have adopted children who are still in Haiti and who are trying to expedite their travel to Canada. However, we would like to offer the follow link for updated information on adoption from Haiti (<http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/adoption/index.htm>), and would also encourage you to check into the adoption process in Haiti as outlined in our general information package in our inter country adoption section on our website ([www.adoption-bc.com](http://www.adoption-bc.com)). We have not received any word to date that this adoption process will be expedited in any way due to the earthquake.

We anticipate that we will continue to work with approved orphanages in Haiti. There have been many changes in this program over the last year in particular too numerous to mention here, however, we wanted to let you know that Haitian adoptions are still possible.

## **Domestic Adoption**

We continue to be busy in this program. Our pool of applicants who are active in this program continue to be lower than normal for our agency. This means families have a better chance of being matched. Families registered for intercountry programs that have a long wait may also want to consider registering with this program in addition to their intercountry registration.

## **United States**

The United States ratified The Hague Convention in April 2008. As a result, the US agency that applicants work with MUST be Hague Accredited and willing to work with Canadian families. We currently work with two agencies in the United States. The children available are of both genders and are primarily of African American, Hispanic and bi-racial backgrounds. Our agency works to place newborn infants from the states. We do not place American children in state foster care systems.

## **Bulgaria**

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We are just introducing an adoption program with Bulgaria. The children are considered to be of Roma, Turkish and/or Armenian heritage. There are children of both genders, typically between the ages of 3-6 years.

### **BC's Waiting Children**

The Adoption Centre of British Columbia now has access to the Ministry of Children and Family Development's database of BC's Waiting Children. Families interested in this program will now be able to work with the agency to learn about and be matched with Waiting Children in BC. The children are typically older, some are sibling groups, children are considered to have special placement needs.

### **Ethiopia Adoption**

Our agency continues to place children from Ethiopia, however the wait time has recently gotten longer. The children placed are infants to 10 years of age, of either gender, sibling groups are also available.

**If you would like to discuss any of these options please feel free to contact either of our social workers, (Marni or Jennifer). We would be happy to hear from you.**

## **CHINA'S WAITING CHILD PROGRAM**

### **Testimony of one Family**

Having worked with the China Centre of Adoption Affairs (CCAA) for well over a decade our China Program has always been close to the hearts of our agency staff. There is such a need for adoptive families, and we have had the privilege of seeing how adopting from China has changed the lives of so many families and children. With the frustrating delays that families have been experiencing with the China Adoption Program, it is exciting to be offering another option.

When our agency first began our China Adoption Program 11 years ago all placements were considered special needs; so when we heard about the Waiting Children Program offered by CCAA we were very interested. The children placed through this program are primarily between the ages of 18 months and six years of age, and are of both genders. The children have been identified as having "minor correctable special needs" which makes them ineligible to be placed through China's non special needs program. All of the children are in the care of orphanages in China under the Administration of the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

The initial process for the Waiting Children Program (WCP) is the same as most other programs. Once the home study and educational components are complete a dossier is compiled. The dossier is then sent to CCAA. The family is placed on a list to be matched according to the

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home study recommendations (age range, gender, medical conditions) by agencies delegated by CCAA to place children from the waiting child program. The agency has access to a database of children available and checks regularly for matches for their families. When a match is made the information on a child is made unavailable to other families for a short period of time to be presented to a family. The time frame is potentially very short depending on the home study recommendations. Families already registered with the non-special needs program can also register; as well as remain with the non-special needs program until matched.

We have now placed four children through this program. The children are all doing well and we continue to be excited about offering this program. Barb and Jay along with their daughter Abbey (5) and son Jacob (3) share the story of their journey to adopt Noah.

*We were registered with the non-special needs program and were concerned about the wait times. We heard about the Waiting Children Program and thought about it for a while before exploring it further. In terms of the dossier preparation it really wasn't too bad. There was lots of support throughout the process. We weren't completely scared off by the idea of some special needs, but were concerned that major special needs may impact significantly on our family. When we learned more about the children placed through this program we spent a lot of time reviewing medical information on-line. We spent time discussing the special needs we were open to with our social worker and they were listed in our home study.*

*We were very surprised to receive a proposal so quickly. We sent in the dossier at the end of September and received a proposal later that month! The proposal was for a boy aged two; the special needs that he presented with were cleft palate, hole in his heart, and a hernia. The hole in his heart as well as the hernia were repaired in China. At the time of accepting the proposal we were required to prepare a Rehabilitation and Nurture Plan for the child in which we list our understanding of the special needs along with a plan for the child's medical care. While we had been expecting to adopt a girl, gender really didn't matter to us, another boy would be great. There were actually quite a few boys available. We were nervous about the bonding with a child that was a little older than we had initially considered. We also believed he may have been placed with a foster family after his surgeries and were concerned about multiple caregivers.*

*Somehow our China Consultant Bonnie Wong worked her miracles and had us travelling before Christmas. We had always planned to travel as a family. The travel actually went much better than expected, it was so well organized. We were in China a few days before Noah was placed. We arrived in a big government building with our guide. We were led to a room with other children and families. All the children being placed were through the Waiting Child Program. We saw Noah right away. Of course he wasn't interested in being placed with us! It was quite*

*chaotic, trying to do the required paperwork, holding Noah, the kids were showing him toys. I guess it was what we expected from the experience, it was certainly unforgettable.*

*We were surprised at the delay in his motor development, and he was not saying any Chinese words despite his age.*

*Noah seemed to bond with (mom) quite quickly and also with his siblings, he was good with his dad but the bonding took longer as his dad went to work daily. To foster the attachment process we wanted to be the only ones to pick him up and meet his needs. It was hard for some friends and family to understand, but we were insistent on this and we really feel this had an impact.*

*It was a rough trip home from China, Noah was two and a half, the trip was long, we were jet-lagged and arrived home to a snow storm!!*

*We stayed close to home for many months to establish a sense of home and routine for Noah. The boys initially shared a room but eventually there was too much fooling around so each child had their own room and also their own space. We didn't leave him with anyone for the first 10 months and we feel that really helped with the bonding process. Noah seemed to attach to his siblings right away, we expected Abbey and Jacob to struggle more with the adjustment of a younger brother but they really adore him.*

*It is amazing to us how much he has developed in the first six months after placement. His comprehension of English in the first few weeks was unbelievable. He soon began to enjoy a full range of food and now has a wonderful appetite.*

*The sibling interaction seems quite typical. We have great days and challenging days. We went from being a family of four to a family of five and that significantly changes the workload. Trying to spend time with each child takes constant effort. The boys have both just started pre-school/daycare two half days per week. I stayed with Noah in the beginning but now he is fine on his own.*

*In terms of his special needs he has had the surgery for his cleft palate and his recovery went well. We have had lots of support from family and friends, we have a good routine established. His pediatrician feels he is developing very typically but reminds us that learning disabilities would not show up until he is school aged as would be the case with most children.*

*Noah is a very social and confident young boy. He has a ready smile, and lot of hugs and cuddles for the family. As with typical three year olds he has just begun asking "why" questions.....!*

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***We can't remember not having Noah in our family and we can't imagine life without him.***

Thank-you to Barb and Jay for sharing their story. They are wonderful advocates for the program. If you would like to learn more about this program check-out our website at [www.kcr.ca](http://www.kcr.ca) or [www.adoption-bc.com](http://www.adoption-bc.com) or feel free to call the agency.

Looking forward to hearing from you! Stay in touch and take good care!

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OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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