



FAMILY ALBUM

A Quarterly Publication of Nightlight Christian Adoptions

Fall 2009

NEW ARRIVALS FROM OVERSEAS



Above: Terrill Family

FROM CHINA, KYRGYZSTAN, TAIWAN AND RUSSIA, WE ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE ARRIVAL OF...

Nikita, Valentina, and Yuri to parents Richard and Jackie Watson of Santa Ana, CA • Katie to parents David and Kim Mason of Weimar, TX • Lyubov to parent Claudia Ledri of Laguna Niguel, CA • Kseniya to parents Gary and Jane Milius of Aliso Viejo, CA • Daniel to parents Eric and Diane Nichols of Long Beach, CA • Artyom to parents Karl and Rhonda Jarema of Laguna Niguel, CA • Hope to parents Vince and Kellie Walden of Flower Mound, TX • Talyn to parents Devin and Jennifer McAloon of Plano, TX • Andrew to parents Oleg and Larisa Dovgoruk of Salem, OR • Stephen to parents Chris and Krista Lusey of Edmond, OK • Liana to parents Brian and Lan Terrill of Torrance, CA • Alexander to parents Jeff and Stacey Miller of Santee, CA • Peyton to parents Kenton and Violet Vix of Sawyer, ND •



Above: Vix Family



Above: Jovanovic Family

Shaylynn to parents Andy and Darlene Dufrene of Houma, LA • Julia and Alex to parents Mark and Karen Jovanovic of Costa Mesa, CA • Joe to parents Garrett and Margaret Weddle of Draper, VA.

SNOWFLAKE ARRIVALS By Megan Fabian



Above: Kathryn and Claire

Joyfully, the Snowflake Program welcomed six beautiful babies this summer! In May, **Emma Grace** was born to Chris & Sabrina, and **Annika Mirai** was born to Ben & Stephanie. In June, **Tyler Matthew** was born to Chad & Tanya. In July, **Vance Reynolds** was born to Rob & Sarah. In August, **Miles Corbett** was born to Bart & Tammi, **Claire Elizabeth** was born to Steve &

Debby, and **John Ethan** and **Amelia Catherine** were born to Jack and Julie. Welcome home!

To the men and women who chose to give life to their unborn embryos, your choices saved the lives of these children. You are their heroes. Thank you.

There are many embryos waiting to begin their lives with their forever families. If you are a Nightlight client who has already completed one adoption and still feels a calling to parent more children, please consider adopting waiting embryos. They need you!



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LESSONS FROM SCULL RACING...

Sculls, or racing shells, are long and narrow row boats used in competitive racing. Although there are single rower sculls, typically the races involve 2, 4 or 8 rowers. If you have ever watched a scull race you would certainly have been impressed by the amazing teamwork required to keep the scull on course.

More than the speed of the boat, the more critical element of the race is to keep the scull going in a straight line – and that requires teamwork. One rower can cause the scull to veer off course.

I would like to take the opportunity of this update letter to salute the members of our team at Nightlight Christian Adoptions. Our team numbers in the thousands, because they

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Above: Lillian Florence Nicole

NEW DOMESTIC ARRIVALS

We also welcome home the following babies who were adopted through our Domestic Adoption program and were delivered into the waiting arms of their proud parents.

CHILD

Lillian Florence Nicole
Nathan Allen

DATE OF BIRTH

January 13, 2009
January 13, 2009

PROUD PARENTS

Steven and Danielle Feith
Ken and Carrie Laumann

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (continued from page 1)

include our Board of Directors, our staff, our client families and our friends and supporters. So, which team members are the most important? Like scull racing, the responsibility for keeping our agency on course and moving forward is equally shared by each participant. God has miraculously balanced the talents of our team to meet His purposes. Sometimes we move quickly forward, while other times we seem to slow down and barely move. But we always know where we are going.

In April of this year, we acquired Carolina Hope Christian Adoptions in South Carolina. This office is now a branch of Nightlight Christian Adoptions and already contributing to our momentum and keeping us on course. We have weekly telephone

management meetings where we make sure that we are not only well informed of what each division is doing but able to offer suggestions to improve each other.

We have just been notified that we have received funding for the 2nd year of a 3-year grant for embryo adoption awareness, which brings some security to our work force in Colorado. We have also applied for another grant and hope to hear the results later this month. These grants have made a significant impact on the public's awareness of embryo adoption throughout the United States. We recently completed a major public opinion survey which will be released in the next few weeks. This survey showed that over 68% of the public believe that the best choice for frozen embryos which are not going to be used by the family who created them is to donate them to another family to achieve a pregnancy. We need more adopting families to make this a reality.

Our domestic adoptions in both California and South Carolina have shown growth and the need for more adopting families. Families have a better choice than ever of attractive adoption opportunities. But more importantly, we have seen the lives of more children saved as they are given

the chance for a forever family.

International adoptions have presented many challenges to us over the past year. Several countries have closed international adoptions, while others have raised new barriers. It is particularly frustrating to see politics negatively impacting the opportunities for so many children. But in the midst of these hurdles, we have found common ground with other agencies and the ability to network and partner to the benefit of our client families and ultimately the waiting children.

After 10 years in Fullerton, we will be moving our Southern California offices to Anaheim Hills effective October 1st. This is another great example of teamwork as our staff and many volunteers have helped make this move possible – and bearable.

This time of year also brings a need for additional financial support from our faithful supporters. At this time, I would like to remind us all that many supporters make the load lighter. Whatever your ability, you bless us by showing your confidence in our ministry in this tangible way.



Ronald L. Stoddart

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DETSKY DOM PARTNERS



Detsky Dom Partners is the humanitarian foundation that is helping orphans around the world. The first project of the new organization was to raise money to send sweatshirts to children in the orphanages in St. Petersburg, Russia. Detsky Dom Partners is also providing support for the Summer Tours and for *The Harbor*.

If you would like to support Detsky Dom Partners or would like to learn more about this organization and how you might be able to help, please visit the website at www.detskydompartners.org or contact Kathryn Deiters (Kathryn@Nightlight.org). One way to provide support is through corporations providing matching funds for donations you make. We will be happy to give you any information the corporation needs for this purpose.



Above: Children at Detsky Dom 31

OUR JOURNEY

By Karen Jovanovic



Our next door neighbor sent us off on our big trip to Kazakhstan with prayer—inside the airport express bus! He, along with all of our friends and family, had been waiting on pins and needles for news of our travel date. At

the end of our destination waited the two angels that were the answers to our years of thought and prayer. Making the decision to parent two teenagers was not one we took lightly but with the love and support of our families, friends, and Nightlight we were finally on our way.

During our long flight and interim layovers we talked at length about what lay ahead for all of us. How will it feel the first time we meet our children? Will Alex and Julia be afraid of us? How will we bond as a family? In our minds was also the thought that leaving home and living in a foreign country for a month was a bit intimidating but we knew that we were led to Kazakhstan to be with the children that God meant to be ours.

Arriving in Astana, Kazakhstan at 11:30PM, the airport seemed a lonely place and we only hoped that our tiny Russian vocabulary would get us through. Our journey through the terminal, ending at the baggage carousel, was pleasantly uneventful. As we waited for our bags to circulate we eyed a petite woman in a black fur coat jumping and waving her arms. We had exchanged photos beforehand so we knew that this was the person who would be our interpreter, driver, guide, and guardian angel. She was a welcome and extremely amusing sight.

The following day, after trying somewhat successfully to fend off jetlag, we were escorted to the orphanage that housed Alex and Julia. Kazakhstan in January was cold like we had never felt before, but inside the Detsky Dom we were met with a warmth that could melt the ice. We had wondered how our presence would be received there, but it quickly became evident that no thought was wasted on boarders. The main hope was to help the children find their forever families.

Over the weeks we visited, learned, laughed, ate, studied, and bonded with our children. They told us stories about their friends and jokes and songs they liked. They were three-dimensional children that we could see and touch and hug, yet they were still like a dream. The bonding period and court date came and went so quickly and then it was time to leave and complete the first part of this journey. We had a traditional party to celebrate with all in their family group, some of whom would soon be leaving with their own new families. To leave our children and come back home to the States alone was a thought that hadn't received nearly as much consideration, but we were comforted now knowing that we were all a real family. During our time home we were so busy preparing for Alex and Julia that the time passed by quickly. We had not done much to their bedrooms before we left home. We had decided to give them lots of room to make their bedrooms their own. Once we arrived home we looked into each bedroom and realized we now knew so much about them that the real preparation was just now beginning.

After writing our story, above, we decided to ask our kids, 13 and 15 years old, what they thought about parents adopting older kids. With some help on their grammar this is what they said:

“Older kids understand better and can say they want adoption. They appreciate their family and want to be part of the home. Babies always go so fast. They have lots of time, but older kids have not so much time before they have to leave on their own.”



We sometimes reflect on how many people asked why we adopted older children instead of a baby. While our reasons were sound and numerous, our prayer was for help to find the children that were meant to be ours. And that is exactly what happened. The other day a friend and fellow adoptive parent of older children asked how we felt about our decision to adopt teens. Our reply: No decision in all of our lives has brought more joy and enlightenment than coming together with Alex and Julia as a forever family.

JABEZ CUT-A-THON

The Jabez Cut-a-thon was a great success, raising \$2,271 to cover tour expenses. Jabez Salon has been a generous supporter of Nightlight Christian Adoptions for several years. And this year they sponsored their second Cut-a-thon for Nightlight. We are very grateful to them for their ongoing support.



BLESSINGS

Blessings abound for both adopting parents and the children adopted. We would like to share what we've heard from some of our clients recently.

Brenda Richmond was adopted through



our agency's domestic program over 40 years ago. She writes, "...a kid could not

have dreamed up a better life than what I had, great parents, three older brothers and a sister. Yes, there is a huge age difference as my parents were older when they adopted me. My Dad was almost 50. But this was God's plan and it was a good one. When asked, have you ever wanted to find your birth parents, of course there is always that little part that wants to know who we are. But I know who I am. I love my birthmother regardless of what the situation was that led to my adoption. She showed me a love by giving me up to a better life. And because of that, my goal is to always give back to a life that has given so much to me. Back in 1970 I had a bad accident that almost took my life and left a nasty scar across my face. My Dad always said, "Brenda, you determine who you are, not that scar." It was hard being a young lady, but I beat it and today almost everyone will tell you they don't even know it is there. We make our life, adopted or not. How we choose

to see things will dictate who we become. I hope all of you that are involved with the adoption agency keep up the good work and continue to unite kids who need love with parents who have love to give."

One of our Snowflake moms, Cathy Irwin, shared the following:

"I want to thank Nightlight Christian Adoptions for your boldness in declaring these little embryos as 'unique and genetically complete like every other human being' and that these embryos 'already have an eternal soul' Praise God! In an environment that seems to be becoming more and more hostile towards these children your mission is even greater. I will be praying for you because I am sure there are many that would like to see you stop promoting embryo adoption. As the mother of a child adopted as an embryo, I can tell you that our daughter is an absolute miracle and has brought such joy into our lives. What you are doing every day is so important. I can't even begin to tell you how you have impacted our lives."

A young man of 11, Asher Segelken, adopted as a baby from Russia, expresses his gratitude for his adopting parents as well as his Russian birthmother who cared enough to spare his life. He shares the excitement of being able to meet his birth siblings and birthmother.

"When I was born, my birthmother showed the greatest act of compassion. She knew she could not take care of me and allowed me to be put in an orphanage where better hands would guide me. I spent 7 months in an orphanage in St.

Petersburg, Russia. Then I was adopted by the parents I have today and loved in a way I had never felt anywhere else. A few years later I found out I had brothers and sisters left



behind in Russia and intently prayed that God would help me find them. At the age of 9, my Mom saw an article in a magazine that gave information on an organization that could help people find lost siblings in Russia. She contacted the organization with the little information she and my Dad had about my birthmom. Within a week they had found my siblings. When I discovered this I wept with unrestrained joy. The gratitude I felt inside was indescribable. God had answered my prayer. Hallelujah! We began an email relationship with my sisters. My parents had always planned to go back to Russia before I turned 11. We left on June 11, 2008. When we got there I got an even bigger surprise: the person who showed the greatest act of compassion, my birthmom, met us at the airport with roses. When I discovered who she was I was speechless. We spent four days in Russia developing a relationship that could last a lifetime with my two beautiful sisters and my brother as well as my birthmom. Hallelujah Jesus!



NEW EMBRYO ADOPTION VIDEOS RELEASED →

The Nightlight Embryo Adoption Awareness Center recently released new videos featuring Snowflakes families Jennifer and Jason Spohr and Arlo and Wendy Oviatt. The Spohrs and Oviatts vacationed together last autumn in the beautiful Colorado Rockies and invited the Center to come and record their personal testimonies regarding their embryo donation and adoption journey. The Spohrs donated their embryos to the Oviatts. The Oviatts gave birth to twin boys as a result of this precious gift. Their vacation together was their opportunity to meet one another for the first time in person and to allow their children to meet and get to know one another.

You may watch this educational, informative and compelling story by visiting our web site, www.nightlight.org and clicking on **Videos**, or typing into your browser: http://www.embryoadoption.org/videos/vp_combo_story_2.cfm. Pass it along to your friends and family. So many people are still unfamiliar with this unique adoption alternative. Everyone should know about embryo donation and adoption because everyone knows someone who is facing infertility. **Let's get the word out!**

2009 SUMMER TOURS

For the first time we brought a group of children out from Taiwan. Eleven children visited Southern California. And our South Carolina Office participated in hosting a group of children from Ukraine. Both tours were very successful.



Taiwan Tour

Eleven children, from 6 to 11 years of age visited Southern California in July, staying with a local family for the two week visit. They were able to experience life with an American family, go to the beach, a pool party, to Disneyland, view “The Story of Jesus”, and got to sing “Jesus Loves

Me” in Mandarin for the congregation at Calvary Chapel East Anaheim. They had a great time and we all enjoyed them. Several of the children have families proceeding with their adoptions.

Ukraine Tour

Seven children from Ukraine visited South Carolina in August. The children were able to visit the local children’s museum, a water park, enjoy a game of soccer with church friends, and most important—were able to hear the gospel.

Please pray for all of the children on both of the tours, that they would come to a saving relationship with Christ and that they would be able to come back to America to their forever families.

50th ANNIVERSARY PICNIC



We were delighted to see so many families at our Summer Picnic this year, celebrating our 50th

Anniversary. It’s

always so special to see the families—the new ones, those who adopted years ago, locals, and those from far away. This year

I know we had families from as far away as Georgia,



Kansas, and Colorado. You all make it very special for us.

OUR PRECIOUS GIFTS

by Chad & Tanya

Father’s Day was extra special for us this year, as our second son, Tyler Matthew, was born. He was born on his actual due date, June 21, at 3:30 PM. In fact, when I looked back at our calendar from last year, I realized that our frozen embryo transfer last fall had been at 3:30 PM. As our doctor said, he wanted to be punctual! The significance of Tyler’s birth date demonstrates to me the wonder and creativity of God. It was five years ago on June 21 that our close friends gave birth to their second child, and at the time, I wondered if it was in God’s plan to ever allow us the blessing of a child.

Four years prior to that, we learned that it is medically impossible for us to conceive a child. Before seeing our fertility doctor, we had

both separately learned about the Snowflakes program. After receiving our diagnosis, we quickly realized that God was calling us to adopt embryos. But like many adoptions, our journey was filled with ups and downs. We were matched with our first genetic family at the end of 2002 and adopted five embryos. Our first transfer was unsuccessful and the next scheduled transfer did not actually happen because the remaining two embryos turned out to be just one embryo, which did not survive the thaw. We were heartbroken by the disappointments, but we were still confident of God’s calling.

Soon after holding my friend’s baby that June afternoon in 2004, we had our third frozen embryo transfer. We had been matched with a second genetic family and adopted seven embryos, and we had already had an unsuccessful

transfer from that match. As we realized that our pregnancy test would fall on our 8th wedding anniversary, I was confident that God would allow us the best news of our life on that day. But once again, we were devastated to receive a negative pregnancy result.

We continued to pray and tried to be obedient to God’s calling, and it seemed that He was still leading us to Snowflakes. We were so certain of the path He had for us, but we did not understand why our journey had thus far been filled with so many heartaches. We were matched with a third genetic family and adopted 18 embryos, and through some circumstances and several people, including the genetic father, we felt that God was leading us to switch doctors. This was a hard decision to make, as we felt that God could work through any doctor. In May 2005,

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EDUCATION: CLASSES, SEMINARS, AND SUPPORT GROUPS

Nightlight offers the following classes in our offices. If you would like further information on any of these classes, please call us at (714) 278-1020. Pre-registration is required for all of the classes.

ADOPTION CLASSES

Adoption classes are required for all families completing a homestudy through Nightlight. All classes are held in our office (new address after October 1, 2009: 4430 E. Miraloma Ave., Suite B, Anaheim Hills, CA 92807). Please call (714) 278-1020 or email info@nightlight.org to register; **registration is required for all classes.**

Classes required for International clients are designed according to The Hague Standards. These classes will help to ensure that the required parent education and preparation for inter-country adoptions has been completed. Clients will receive a certificate of completion at the close of each class to verify that they have attended the class in its entirety.

ADOPTION SEMINARS

These are informational seminars on Domestic, International, and Embryo adoption.

Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon. There is no charge, but registration is helpful.

Adoption seminars can also be held at local churches. If you would like an adoption seminar offered at your church, please call us at (714) 278-1020 and ask for Kathryn Deiters.

Dates for 2009: November 14

LIFE-LONG ISSUES IN ADOPTION *(required for all clients)*

Thursday evenings from 6:30 – 9:00 p.m. Cost: \$50/Couple

In this class we will look at the core adoption issues, which will give you an understanding of how you are linked to the other members of the adoption triad: the adoptee and the birth family. The material is applicable to all types of adoption, including Domestic, International, or the Snowflakes Embryo Adoption Program, and will help adopting families develop understanding and compassion for everyone involved in the adoption process. For information on upcoming classes, please check our web site, www.nightlight.org.

Dates for 2009: October 22

DOMESTIC ADOPTION DECISIONS *(domestic clients)*

Thursday evenings from 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.; Cost: \$50/Couple

This class will feature an adoptive family discussing their **open adoption**. They will discuss how the type of contact was agreed upon and how it is working out for them.

Dates for 2009: October 15

ATTACHMENT & OTHER ISSUES OF INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION *(international clients)*

Wednesday evenings from 4:00 – 9:00 p.m.; Cost: \$100/Couple

Understanding the theory behind parent and child attachment is important for any parent. However, it becomes particularly important when adopting a child internationally. It is most helpful if this class is taken in the beginning of the homestudy process. This class defines attachment and bonding, reviews the theories behind attachment, and provides practical advice on how to develop a solid attachment with your newly adopted child. Please contact Rhonda Jarema, MA, Director of Family Support Services, with any questions about this class, by emailing her at Rhonda@Nightlight.org.

Dates for 2009: October 14

MEDICAL ISSUES OF INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION *(international clients)*

Saturday mornings from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon; Cost: \$60/Couple

Dr. Gary Feldman, Medical Director of the Stramski Center at Miller Children's Hospital, will be leading this class to provide an overview of the medical issues commonly experienced by children who have been adopted internationally. Dr. Gary Feldman is an expert in his field and we know those of you in attendance will enjoy this informative class. This class satisfies the medical issues training required by The Hague.

Dates for 2009: October 17

LIFEBOOKS WORKSHOP

Getting ready to adopt? Have your children been home over a year already? Anytime is a great time for beginning your child's Lifebook! This treasured book tells your child's story from the day they were born (or created) until the day they joined your family. It helps children answer the question of "Why was I adopted?" and helps fill that void with accurate information. Children are also welcome to attend with their parents. Workshops are held once a month on Sundays from 12:00-4:00 at the Nightlight office. Come join us! Please call Megan Fabian for class dates.

SUPPORT PROGRAMS

There are two ongoing support groups: Moms of Internationally Adopted Preschoolers and Moms of School-aged Internationally Adopted Children. If you are interested in participating, please contact Rhonda Jarema, Rhonda@Nightlight.org, for more information.

EMAIL SUPPORT GROUPS

Snowflakes - If any of you would like to be added to the Snowflake Adopting Parent or Genetic Parent Yahoo groups, please contact Megan Fabian at Megan@Nightlight.org. The Snowflake families are great about sharing information they learn with others in the group. We would be happy to add you.

Taiwan - Families adopting from Taiwan may join our Yahoo group for this country, which provides a wonderful way to meet other families adopting from Taiwan. Please contact Kathryn Deiters at Kathryn@Nightlight.org to be added to this group.

WEBINARS

Nightlight offers regular webinars for our clients. The following is a list of what is available now. More information on these programs will be available on our web site at: www.nightlight.org.

- **Are We Ready to Adopt Transracially?**

Part of the webinar series on Domestic Adoptions

Date: 09/23/2009

Time: 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm ET

Cost: \$15.00 Per Person

Perhaps you are considering adopting outside of your race, but you are still unsure if it is right for you and a child. Perhaps you are concerned about how a child will fit into your family or your neighborhood. We will discuss practical ways to help you determine if adopting transracially is right for you.

- **Financing an Adoption**

Part of the webinar series, *"Starting the Process of Adoption"*

Date: 09/24/2009

Time: 9:00 pm - 10:30 pm ET

Cost: \$15.00 Per Person

You might be able to afford to raise another child, but unable to pay the costs of an adoption. We will discuss ways you can access monies available to adopting families as well as creative ways to raise awareness and funds for your adoption.

- **The Homestudy**

Part of the webinar series, *"Starting the Process of Adoption"*

Date: 09/28/2009

Time: 9:00 pm - 10:30 pm ET

Cost: Free

The homestudy is the first step to completing an adoption. We will help you understand what is asked during the homestudy and what documents are required. Regardless of what agency you are adopting from or what state you live in, you will need to know what the essential ingredients of a homestudy are. You will also learn what distinguishes a Hague homestudy from a non-Hague homestudy.

- **Ethiopia Adoptions: An Introduction**

Part 1 in the webinar series on Ethiopia Adoptions

Date: 09/29/2009

Time: 9:00 pm - 10:30 pm ET

Cost: Free

Many children are orphaned because of poverty, disease, and the AIDS crisis in Ethiopia. The plight of those children growing up without a mother or father in this impoverished country is very bleak. In general, families are quickly assigned children, and the adoptions can usually be completed within one year. Babies, toddlers, and school age children all need families.

CURIOUS ABOUT DOMESTIC ADOPTION?

By Victory Allan

Nightlight has had an upswing of birthmothers who are calling for counseling and we need loving and accepting couples to adopt babies. Most of the birthmothers are right here in Southern California and looking for a strong couple to adopt their babies.

There are several ways you can learn more about domestic adoption. You may speak to the Director of Social Work, Victory Allan or Mary Madison, who works with our birthmothers. Both are very knowledgeable and happy to share their knowledge with you and dispel any negative myths about domestic adoption. Just call Nightlight's California office and we can speak over the phone or make an appointment to come into the office.

Nightlight also offers a DAD class (Domestic Adoption Decisions). In this informal class, you will have a chance to listen to and speak with a family that has completed a domestic adoption. You will learn about their experience with their birthmother, what to do in the hospital, as well as the legal aspects of domestic adoption. Also discussed in the class is meeting the birthmother as well as the relationship with the birthmother after the adoptive placement. There are various options for an open adoption, as each adoption is unique and has its own parameters.

Couples who come to talk about their domestic adoption always bring their new baby to the DAD class and, without saying a word, the baby relates the most powerful message. Come join us for the next DAD class, October 15, at 6:30 p.m., in our new office at 4430 E. Miraloma Avenue, Suite B, Anaheim Hills, CA 92807. To register, call us at (714) 278-1020, or feel free to email us at info@nightlight.org.

THE HARBOR NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

The Harbor is a wonderful Christian organization in St.



Petersburg, Russia that helps Russian youth when they leave the orphanages. They provide training in life skills, teach them job skills, and provide a positive Christian home life

for the youth so that they can learn what it is like to live in a family.

They are in need of volunteers to go over to teach practical skills that can later be used for a job. This may be cosmetologists/beauticians, computer skills, video production, web site development, ceramics/pottery, carpentry, English, culinary arts, business development, among others.

Adults as well as kids adopted from Russia and now in their late teens or early twenties (who still speak Russian) are needed. They should be able to stay for a month or longer, although shorter stays can be accommodated as well.



To learn more about *The Harbor*, please visit their web site, www.theharborspb.org. There you may view a video to see how lives are being changed, and learn how you can help support the effort to help the youth of Russia.

LAILA ROSE FOUNDATION

If you are considering adopting a special needs child, *The Laila Rose Foundation* may be able to help. The Foundation was formed in 2006, in loving memory of Laila Rose Engh, who was lost at the tender age of four in a tragic automobile accident, along with her dear mother, Lisa Engh. The family has decided to turn their grief into action and find a way for Laila's legacy to bring the sort of joy to others that she brought to her family's lives as a daughter, sister, granddaughter, niece, and friend.

The mission of the Foundation is to provide needed support to foreign born orphans eligible to come to or already arrived in the United States for adoption, to the adoptive families of such orphans, and to organizations assisting the orphans and adoptive families.

You too may join in helping children by contacting the Foundation at info-lailarose@aol.com or by calling (703) 360-9660.

CONGRATULATIONS!



Logan Feussner (left) won the Most Christ-Like Award with the Upward Basketball Program. Congratulations, Logan!

Anton Gottfredson has been offered the Stupak Olympic Athlete Scholarship and will be going to the University of Colorado. He'll be living on the Olympic Training Center campus in Colorado Springs, rubbing elbows with many of the best US Olympic athletes. This is a wonderful opportunity for him. He is competing in National and World

Trials and was just ranked in the top 10 US Greco-Roman wrestlers at 74 kg. Congratulations, Anton!



Oleg McDonald (left) was adopted in 1997 when he was 10 years old. He has gone on to join the Navy and has recently been promoted to Petty Officer 3rd Class.

He is currently stationed at the Naval Hospital in Bremerton, WA. We're very proud of you, Oleg!

Katerina Elizabeth Nelson graduated from California State University, Long Beach with a

Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology with a minor in French on May 28, 2009.

Congratulations, Katya!

Luba Sigaty (right) graduated from El Modena High School June 11, 2009.

Congratulations, Luba!



Anya Ruth Watford (left) graduated from Los Osos High School on June 10, 2009. Congratulations, Anya!



OUR PRECIOUS GIFTS (continued from page 5)

we had a transfer with our new doctor, but again our pregnancy test was negative. Through this, God was teaching us that obedience to His call does not always look like what we expect.



graciously blessed us with Ethan Richard (left), who was born on October 19, 2006!

When Ethan turned a year old, we began thinking and praying about how God wanted us to expand our family. Once again, we both felt

Just prior to our sixth transfer in July 2005, I felt at peace, knowing that we were doing what we were called to do but that He was the One in control. And two weeks later, we were thrilled to learn that we were pregnant! But the greatest joy of our lives turned into the deepest heartache as we lost the baby at 8 weeks. We had our next transfer in February 2006 with our remaining embryos, and we had decided that this would be our last transfer if it was not successful. Instead, though, we were thrilled to learn that we were pregnant, and this time we were expecting twins! But once again, joy was accompanied by heartache when we had an ultrasound at 16 weeks and learned that one of the twins had died at the end of our first trimester. Thankfully, God

clearly led to the Snowflakes program. After our first experience, we had no idea what the path would look like. We were matched with a genetic family and adopted eight embryos. We had our transfer last October, and just prior to Ethan's second birthday, we found out that we were pregnant! We suspected that we were once again expecting twins, but after a complication and an emergency visit to the doctor, we learned that we had been expecting twins but again had lost one of the babies. Thankfully, though, we were blessed with Tyler Matthew (right) on June 21, 2009.

I find significance in the fact that he was our gift on Father's Day, as we had previously had so many difficult Mother's and Father's Days, as is true for so many infertile couples.

Both of our experiences are clear reminders to us of God's love and how He blesses us beyond what we can imagine. We obviously grieve for our 35 precious Snowflakes who are now in the arms of Jesus (we still have 1 frozen embryo waiting), yet we cannot imagine not having Ethan and Tyler in our lives. Some of our most special moments are watching the boys together, and we realize that it is only through the sovereignty of God that these two precious boys are brothers.



"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father..."
James 1:17

HOW TO ANSWER THE HARD QUESTIONS ABOUT BIRTH PARENTS

By Rhonda Jarema

Recently, I've had a number of parents question me about what they should say when their child asks about their biological parents. These are families who have adopted internationally and really had little to no information about their child's early life, let alone much information about their child's biological parents. This leaves a hole that is often difficult for both parents and their child or children, as they try to fill in the blanks from the past.

Often parents become anxious when they hear such questions. It is important to give information at your child's level of development rather than all the specifics that may only increase anxiety for all involved. Sometimes you may not have any information and then the only answer you really have is, "I'm sorry, but I really don't know. I wish I had more information to give you." It is not unusual for children who have been adopted to have questions about their biological family and even to have bouts of *magical thinking* where they imagine life as it *should have been* rather than as it was. The magical thinking we see with adopted children helps them to reconcile the difficult past with their wish for how it could have been if their adoptive family had been their birth family. I think it helps to actually verbalize this in an empathetic way.

Some of the children have had a very difficult and possibly abusive past that they might not remember. I do not think it is helpful for you to go into detail about what you know or suppose from the little information you have until your child is a legal adult. Look at where your child is developmentally and keep it very

simple. But it is important that you listen to your child and acknowledge their questions.

Here is an example that might help you as you consider your response to your child. "Hmmm, I sometimes wish you had been born directly into this family. We would have protected you and loved you from the moment we knew of you. But we did begin loving you the moment we knew of you. From the minute we learned about you, we couldn't wait until the day you were in our arms and we could be your forever parents. Sometimes people have children before they are ready or able to take care of them. When you were born, your birth mother and father made a very loving decision to place you in the baby home where you would be fed and clothed. They knew that your caregivers would try to find the best family for you. We are very sad about some of the things that you had to face as a very little baby. But you also had good experiences and people who loved you and helped you to become the beautiful, loving, sweet and sensitive little boy or girl you are today. If you had been born into this family, you wouldn't have your beautiful brown/blue/black eyes, silky/curly/straight black/blonde/brown hair and wonderful culture. You have brought so much into our lives, we are so blessed to have you as OUR child, forever and ever!"

The child who talks about missing their birth mother might actually be afraid that you too might go away. It helps to offer reassurance, acceptance and comfort. As you accept the comments, you show acceptance of your child and who she or he is, genetically and environmentally. Some children might have photos of their birth family. Others might only have photos of their friends or caregivers

and some none at all. Some families put these photos up in the child's bedroom along with other photos of their adoptive family. Others mix the photos in with family photos that are throughout the home. Others pray for the birth mother or parents. Some might pray nightly and others may have a special prayer on mother's day or the day of their birth mother's birth or death.

I think it helps to refer to your child's birth parent(s) by their first names rather than as your 'Chinese/Russian/etc. Mom or Dad.' That clarifies that you are the mom or dad who takes care of your child when ill, answers the questions about math, holds them when they are sad and tucks them in at night. Whether you refer to yourself as Mama, Mom, Mommy, Dad, Daddy, Papa, etc., it helps to refer to the birth parents by a different name.

Most of us have a baby book from when we were born. In the adoption world, we encourage parents to make a book for their child, of photos and memories from their adoption journey. These books are commonly referred to as 'Life books.' They tell the story of your child as he or she came into your family. Children who are comfortable with their past are better able to face their future.

When kids bring up stuff from the past, they want reassurance that today's family and situation will continue. I also believe that when the adoptive family accepts the child's feelings and doesn't try to confront or change them, it is best for all. You do not want to push your child into feeling they need to defend a birth parent, but instead that you are all on the same page. Sometimes the best answer can be the simplest. "I love you for who you are and I'm so glad you are MY son or daughter!"

WAYS TO SUPPORT NIGHTLIGHT

GOODSEARCH.COM AND GOODSHOP.COM

GoodSearch.com is a Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half of its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. So simply by designating Nightlight Christian Adoptions as your charity and using it as you would any search engine you'll be able to watch those pennies add up!

When you shop online, please try to make your purchases through www.GoodShop.com, an online "shopping mall" which donates up to 37% of each purchase to your favorite charity: Nightlight Christian Adoptions! There are hundreds of great stores, including Amazon, Target, Gap, Best Buy, eBay, Macy's and Barnes & Noble that have teamed up with

GoodShop.com. Every time you place an order, you'll be supporting our programs and helping us help others.

How do you sign up? It's easy! Just go to www.goodsearch.com and enter Nightlight Christian Adoptions as the charity you want to support. Be sure to tell your friends and family too.

DOMESTIC—HELPING BIRTHMOTHERS

While birthmothers are waiting to be matched with an adopting couple, many of them struggle financially. They would love to receive gift cards from places like Target, Starbucks, chain restaurants, gas cards, etc.—\$25 cards would be helpful and greatly appreciated.

IN THE NEWS

If you see Nightlight or one of our families in the News, please let us know so we can share with all of you.

On May 31, 2009 an article appeared in the **Las Vegas Review-Journal**, "Couple starts family through 'embryo adoption', Agency brings together those seeking children with others who have unneeded embryos".

BABY BOTTLE FUNDRAISERS



These fundraisers are a very successful means of allowing churches to become involved in a profound way in support of Nightlight Christian Adoptions and our ministry to help women who are facing a crisis pregnancy. Please talk to people at your church to find out if they would like to support a fundraiser. You may contact Kathryn Deiters for more information.

THE TRICYCLE GUILD



Are you looking for a worthy organization to support, volunteering your time and talents? Nightlight has the answer—The Tricycle Guild! We get together and have parties just for fun; we have gatherings to plan upcoming events, and we have "work parties" before our big events.

For further information or if you are interested in joining The Tricycle Guild, please contact Kathryn Deiters at (714) 278-1020 or Kathryn@Nightlight.org.

CARS 4 CAUSES



If you would like to donate an old car, truck, or van, regardless of where you live, you may contact Cars 4 Causes and they will take care of everything.

Phone (800) 766-CARE (800-766-2273). Tell them you would like the proceeds to be given to Nightlight Christian Adoptions. Cars 4 Causes will pick up the car, towing it if necessary, without charge to you. Cars 4 Causes fixes up the car, sells it, and sends a check to Nightlight.

If you have any questions about the program, please call Nightlight at (714) 278-1020.

NOTE TO READERS!

Please notify us if your mailing address or email address changes. We send out two mailed newsletters annually now and monthly e-newsletters. We want to be sure we have your current information.

NIGHTLIGHT CALENDAR

2009

October

- 01 - 02 Moving to new location
- 14 Attachment & Other Issues
- 15 Domestic Adoption Decisions
- 17 Medical Issues of Intl Adoption
- 22 Life-Long Issues in Adoption

November

- 14 Adoption Seminar

2010

March

- 20 2010 Gala

For more information on any of these events, please call the office: **(714) 278-1020**.

FAMILY ALBUM

Nightlight Christian Adoptions

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Fullerton, California 92831

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FAMILY ALBUM

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Fall 2009

NIGHTLIGHT HEADQUARTERS MOVING

We're moving! Effective October 1, 2009:

4430 East Miraloma Avenue, Suite B
Anaheim Hills, CA 92807
(714) 693-KIDS (5437)

We feel very blessed to have found this new site to move our office. It will meet our needs perfectly — it's convenient for our clients to get to, has just the right amount of space, and the lease terms are very attractive.

We would love to welcome you to our new site — after October 5th, unless, of course, you'd like to help with the move. We have a couple of items on our wish list if you'd like to know what we need: a big screen TV for our new classroom and tall cabinets to store supplies out of sight in the classroom.

If you have a truck and some free time on October 1st and 2nd we could certainly use your help in moving. You may contact Kathryn Deiters for more information at Kathryn@Nightlight.org or (714) 278-1020.