

Passport

to the International Adoption Center



March 2014

www.cincinnatichildrens.org/iac

Passport to Forever raises \$106,000 for the IAC



The thirteenth annual Passport to Forever benefit dinner took place on Saturday, November 2, 2013 at the Oscar Event Center at Jungle Jim's International Market in Fairfield. More than 400 people attended and raised \$106,000 to directly benefit the International Adoption Center (IAC).

The theme for the evening was "Building Families From Around the World" and included silent and live auctions, as well as a children's fashion show. Live auction items included a Getaway to Seabrook Island, SC, a Bengals Fever package, and a New York City Weekend package. Raffles included an 18 karat white gold diamond and blue topaz earrings donated by Richter & Phillips Co.

Kit Andrews of Local 12 News was the emcee for the evening.

Dr. Mary Allen Staat, IAC director, thanked sponsors and individual donors saying, "Our ability to make certain that our children and their families receive the services they need has been greatly enhanced by your generous support and commitment."

Children ranging in age from 1 to 11 years old adopted from 18 different countries took part in the annual children's fashion show. They wore fashions that reflected their birth county.

More photos from the children's fashion show are included on pages 4 and 5.

Continued on pages 4 and 5...

Sibshop workshops for brothers and sisters of internationally adopted children



Sibshop workshops, a nationally acclaimed program, are now being offered by the IAC, for siblings of internationally adopted children with special needs.

These particular workshops are geared towards brothers and sisters 8 to 12 years old of an internationally adopted child with special needs. They may struggle with:

- Changes in the family since the adoption.
- Coping with their sibling's challenging behaviors.
- Contending with their sibling's medical needs.

Continued on page 7...

INSIDE

2014 Passport to Forever Save the Date	2
2013 Adoption Tax Credit: Ten Things You Should Know	3
Photos from the Passport to Forever Fashion Show	4-5
What about me? Addressing Sibling Issues in Adoption	6
Sibshop Workshops for Brothers and Sisters of Internationally Adopted Children	7
The IAC at a Glance	8



IAC STAFF MEMBERS

Sandra Batsel-Thomas, MD
staff psychiatrist
Andrea Bohlen, LISW-S
mental health therapist
Robin Gordon
post-adoption coordinator
international travel clinic coordinator
Kelly Hicks, RN, MSN
nurse coordinator
Irina Parkins, PhD
staff psychologist
Christina Ramey
pre-adoption coordinator
Mary Allen Staat, MD, MPH
IAC director
Tisha Way, LISW-S
mental health therapist

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IAC MISSION

The mission of the International Adoption Center is to uniquely address the health and wellness needs of internationally adopted children, their families, and their communities so that international adoption will be more widely embraced as a way to build families.

Editor: Jane Howie 513-636-0158
jane.howie@cchmc.org

Passport is published three times each year. To be added to or removed from the mailing list for this newsletter, contact Christina Ramey at christina.ramey@cchmc.org or 513-636-2877, opt. 2.

To give feedback about the newsletter or if you have a story idea, contact Jane Howie at jane.howie@cchmc.org or 513-636-0158.

International Adoption Center Contact Information

3333 Burnet Ave., MLC 7036, Cincinnati, OH 45229
www.cincinnatichildrens.org/iac

For overnight deliveries: 3333 Burnet Ave., Building Location S8.600
Cincinnati, OH 45228

Phone: 513-636-2877; Toll Free 1-800-344-2462, ext. 62877

Fax: 513-636-6936

International Travel Clinic Contact Information

Offering international travel preparation and vaccinations to individuals and children of all ages

Two Convenient Locations and Days:

Cincinnati Children's Main Hospital:

Wednesdays – 8 am to 11 am
Fridays – 8 am to 3 pm

Cincinnati Children's Liberty Location:

Mondays – 8 am to 4 pm
Wednesdays – 8 am to 4 pm

Phone: 513-636-2877, option 5



Save the Date – Mark your Calendars!

2014 Passport to Forever

November 8, 2014 at the Oscar Event Center at Jungle Jim's in Fairfield

The 2013 adoption tax credit: ten things you should know

Nancy Burns, Esq., Mother of Four Internationally Adopted Children

A tax credit is offered to adoptive parents to encourage adoption. In filing your tax return this year, please keep the following in mind.

- 1.** The maximum adoption tax credit for 2013 is \$12,970 per child. The purpose of the adoption tax credit is to offset “qualified adoption expenses” of taxpayers who adopted a child in 2013.
- 2.** “Qualified adoption expenses” are reasonable and necessary adoption fees, including court costs, attorney fees, travel expenses including airline tickets, meals, lodging, and other expenses directly related to the adoption.
- 3.** The adoption credit in 2013 is nonrefundable, however any unused credit amount can be carried forward for up to five years.
- 4.** The adoption credit amount begins to phase out for taxpayers with modified adjusted gross income of more than \$194,580 and completely phases out at \$234,580.
- 5.** You must complete and attach Form 8839 – Qualified Adoption Expenses, to your return. If the foreign adoption is from a country governed by the Hague Convention, you must also attach The Hague Adoption Certificate, the IH-3 visa, or a foreign adoption decree translated into English. If the foreign adoption is from a country that is not party to the Hague Convention, you must also attach a foreign adoption decree translated into English or an IR-2 or IR-3 visa.
- 6.** Sixty-nine percent of 2012 returns claiming the adoption credit were audited by the IRS. On average, only one percent of all returns are audited. The IRS may audit your return and require additional documentation, including copies of receipts for your claimed expenses, entry visas, final decree, certificate or order of adoption, and the home study by an authorized placement agency.
- 7.** You cannot electronically file your return because of the documentation you are required to attach to your return. You must file a paper return.
- 8.** In nearly all cases, if you are married, you must file a joint return to claim the credit.
- 9.** If your employer provided adoption benefits, you may be able to exclude those benefits from your income as well as take the adoption credit. However, you cannot take the adoption credit for expenses covered by your employer-provided adoption benefits. The adoption credit and the exclusion for employer-provided benefits are each \$12,970.
- 10.** Your state may also provide an adoption tax credit. Ohio's credit is \$1,500 and can be carried forward for two years.

See IRS Form 8839 and Instructions for Form 8839 for detailed instructions. The information provided in this article is general in nature and is not meant as advice for your particular situation. Please consult your tax or legal advisor.

Have Questions about Adoption Tax Credits?

Contact Nancy Burns at
nburns@smrslaw.com
or 513-345-1411.



Nancy Burns, with her children from left to right: Andrew, Emily, Ailsa and Will

Nancy Burns, an attorney with Schwartz Manes Ruby & Slovin, and her husband Mark Bever are the proud parents of four children from Kazakhstan.

Passport to Forever - continued

Save the Date:

2014 Passport to Forever – Saturday,
November 8, 2014 at the Oscar Center
at Jungle Jim's International Market

How to Get Involved:

- Volunteer to help with the auction events, raffle or fashion show
- Bring back unique items from your child's country of origin to donate to the silent auction

To get involved, please attend a Passport kick-off brunch on Saturday, April 12, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. RSVP and/or receive more information from event co chairs Nancy Kayes at kayesfamily@cinci.rr.com or Karen Sparling at karen.sparling@cchmc.org.

1. Esther Evans (Haiti)
2. Abby Vollmer (Vietnam)
3. A.J. and Bryson Allen (Ethiopia)
4. Moses Kibonge Browning (Democratic Republic of Congo) and Xander Berger (Korea)
5. Jailyn Thornberry (China) and Vedika Ehlers (India)
6. Rosie Gieseke (Ethiopia) and Ryan Barnes (Guatemala) with volunteer
7. Sibella Russell (China) and Daniel Barkdoll (Honduras)
8. Maria and Reina Haas (Guatemala)
9. Xavier Nichols (Colombia)
10. Kaleb and Lia Rowland (Ethiopia) with a volunteer
11. Yana Kemp, Alina Koenig, Mary Helen Strasser and Mia Schnell (Russia)
12. Mila Decastro (China)
13. Nicholas Johnson (Russia)
14. Benjamin Strasser (China)
15. Nathan Sorn (Guatemala)
16. Olya Pence (Kazakhstan)
17. Emma Hockenbery (China)
18. Jace (Siberia) and Tate Jones (Ethiopia) and Nate Hammann (Russia)
19. Elli Focht (Taiwan) and Ellie Davis (Vietnam)
20. Robel Teller (Ethiopia)
21. Matthew and Peter Sebralla (Thailand)
22. Catarina Kenat (Guatemala)
23. Rickson and Alana Herrell (Marshall Islands) with volunteers

Photos from the



Passport to Forever Fashion Show



A special *THANKS* to everyone who participated in making this year's event a success!



What about me?

Addressing sibling issues in adoption



Tisha Way, LISW-S, mental health therapist

About Tisha Way:

Tisha graduated with a Masters of Social Science Administration (MSW) concentrating in Mental Health from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, OH.

She completed her undergraduate Bachelor of Science degree in Social Work at Xavier University.

As an IAC mental health therapist, Tisha conducts diagnostic assessments of children recently adopted and counsels children and parents to foster post-adoption support and enhance well-being. Her areas of focus include:

- Anxiety
- Adjustment issues
- Attachment issues
- Trauma
- Executive functioning skills
- ADHD
- Depression

If you would like to find about more or schedule an appointment with Tisha, call the IAC Call Center at 513-636-2877, option 1.

Being a sibling can be a hard job, particularly in our fast-paced, agenda-packed society. You have to share, compromise, and many times, take the back seat whether you like it or not. Siblings of internationally adopted children are no exception.

The adoption process is filled with hope and anticipation. This leads to expectations that may or may not be met once their sibling arrives home. In the early adjustment period, time and attention is a valuable commodity. **Receiving less attention from parents, family, and friends is a common stressor for siblings. For the first time, some children realize that their family is “different.”** While some children embrace this, the last thing that many children, especially school-aged children, want to be is “different.” It is also very difficult to understand why their new sibling cries so much, is mean to them, hurts them, breaks things, and has different rules than they do.

It is common for families to discuss anticipated changes both during the adoption process and after their new sibling arrives home. Children benefit most when these discussions are led by parents on an ongoing basis.

Here are a few tips in maintaining this communication:

- Maintain routine, one-on-one time with each child. These can be through at-home activities such as making a loom bracelet together or baking a cake, or going out to lunch at their favorite restaurant. Anything that creates the opportunity for connection and creativity. Doing so communicates that they are still a priority and opens the door for communication that often does not occur when other family members are present.

- Acknowledge their feelings, but avoid excessive questioning. Open-ended statements communicate that you notice how they are feeling and provide the opportunity for them to talk. Examples include:
 - “You looked very upset during your brother’s tantrum this morning.”
 - “I bet it was hard to sleep last night with your sister’s crying.”
 - “It must be hard to share mommy’s lap.”
- Praise your child’s positive character traits
 - “Thanks for being a good role model for your sister. I know it isn’t always easy.”
 - “You were really patient at dinner last night. I really appreciate how well you manage your frustrations.”

Having your child take part in a workshop for brothers and sisters of adopted children is another suggestion. We recently held our first Sibshop workshop at the IAC. In this group, siblings of internationally adopted children had the opportunity to meet and share with other siblings like them. With the use of therapeutic activities, these children were able to learn through other’s experiences and learn that they are not alone in their feelings.

If you would be interested in future Sibshop events, please contact me at tisha.way@cchmc.org or Andrea Bohlen at 513-803-1741 or andrea.bohlen@cchmc.org.

Sibshop workshops for brothers and sisters of internationally adopted children *(continued)*

Each session will include games, activities, a meal, and peer support in a therapeutic setting. Sibshops will be facilitated by IAC social workers, staff from the Family Resource Center at Cincinnati Children's, and volunteers.

Brothers and sisters at these workshops:

- Are able to hang out with other kids who know how they feel.
- Learn to solve problems many kids face.
- Feel appreciated for who they are.

Family participants who attended the first Sibshop workshops at the IAC said:

"At Sibshop, I learned that I am not the only one that feels the way I do toward my adopted sister. And I wasn't afraid to share my feelings there."

"Going to the Sibshop made us feel unique since our sister is from another continent. We were able to share our story and feelings with other kids."

"Sibshop was a wonderful outlet for my girls to express their feelings with other kids who understand!"

Here is what you need to know:

- The workshops last 3 hours and cost \$10 (meal included).
- There will be both evening and day workshops at the Main and Liberty locations.
- A parent will be asked to participate in a 15 minute wrap-up session.

Future workshops will be scheduled based on demand.

If you have an interest in learning more, or scheduling your child for a Sibshop workshop, please contact Andrea Bohlen, IAC mental health therapist, at andrea.bohlen@cchmc.org or 513-803-1741.



The IAC at a Glance

Update from Dr. Mary Allen Staat, director



*Dr. Staat with her children
George, Emily and Katie*

It is hard to believe that my three children are now adults. It seems like we just brought them home! So many children were being adopted then from all over the world. It's sad to say that there are still thousands of children still waiting to be adopted, yet the options for international adoption are very limited. With many country closings and an overall slower process for those countries still open, the number of children we have coming home is at a stable low.

We continue to have many wonderful children with special needs from China who are coming home to join their new families. We are also seeing newly-arriving children from Africa (Ethiopia and the Congo), Bulgaria, India and Haiti. We are still hopeful that other countries will re-open this year.

In addition to seeing families right after they come home, more and more families are also taking advantage of our mental health services with Andrea Bohlen and Tisha Way at the Main Campus and at the Liberty Township Campus respectively. In order to meet the needs of our internationally adopted families, we are offering workshops to address the issues our families are facing.

We also offer services at our International Travel Clinic for families who are traveling abroad for international adoption, as well as for anyone - adults or children, traveling for vacation, mission work, visiting friends or families, school trips or even business travel.

Address Service Requested

www.cincinnatichildrens.org/iac

Cincinnati, OH 45229-3039

3333 Burnet Avenue

MILC 7036

Adoption Center

International

