

# Passport

to the International Adoption Center



March 2013

[www.cincinnatichildrens.org/iac](http://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/iac)

## Passport to Asia Raises \$111,000 for the IAC



The twelfth annual Passport to Forever benefit dinner took place on Saturday, November 3, 2012 at the Oscar Event Center at Jungle Jim's International Market in Fairfield. The event brought together nearly 500 people and raised \$111,000 to directly benefit the International Adoption Center (IAC).

Dr. Mary Allen Staat, IAC director, thanked sponsors and individual donors for sharing in her vision, in helping to bring home thousands of children, while working to provide the essential services needed for their care. She announced that mental health services will be expanded this year, thanks in part to the funds raised by the benefit.

Passport to Asia featured a dinner, silent and live auctions, as well as a children's fashion show. Live auction items included a Las Vegas Vacation, a Getaway to Seabrook Island, a Bengals Fever package, and a "Home for the Holidays" staycation package. The night's big raffle was a diamond necklace donated by The Richter & Phillips Co.

The Asian-themed event celebrated "The Year of the Dragon" and included eastern dragon origami centerpieces hand made in part by Nathan Boerner, a 12-year-old boy adopted from Korea. Attendees also enjoyed a dragon dance by the Greater Cincinnati Chinese School.

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



Children ranging in age from 1 ½ to 11 years old adopted from 15 different countries took part in the annual children's fashion show. They wore fashion that reflected their own style or birth county.

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

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## IAC STAFF MEMBERS

Robin Gordon  
post-adoption 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  
Tracie Williams  
customer service representative, billing

## IAC ADVISORY BOARD

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clinical research marketing associate  
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Karen Sparling, assistant vice president,  
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### IAC Volunteers:

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Anne Chambers  
Bobbie Jo Ehlers  
Heather Focht  
Kate Furlong, board president  
Maggie Gieseke  
Ken Goldhoff  
Nancy Kayes  
Cathy Koenig  
Victoria Nymberg  
Brandy Pence  
Herman Rumpke  
Autumn Schmidt  
Paul Sparling

## 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

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- Pre-adoption services: Option 2
- Post-adoption services: Option 3
- Post-adoption appointments: Option 1 to speak with the Call Center
- Medical Questions: Option 4
- Mental Health Services: Option 6
- Billing or Insurance Questions: Option 7

## The IAC Announces New International Health Services for Travelers

The IAC is excited to now offer International Health Services for Travelers, including international travel preparation and vaccination for adults and children.

Because international travelers are at an increased risk for conditions not typically seen in the United States, it is important for them to be educated about the potential health risks of traveling to a specific country or area and be medically prepared.

International travelers can contact the IAC to learn about the most up-to-date travel related health issues. The IAC can also provide travelers with the appropriate immunizations and medical follow-up care for those who may return home ill.

The IAC will work with families and individuals of all ages to assure that they are ready for international travel, whether they are traveling for adoption, business, pleasure or as part of a mission or school trip.

Appointments are offered at two convenient locations and days:

- Cincinnati Children's Liberty Location  
– Mondays, 8 am to 4 pm
- Cincinnati Children's Main Location  
– Wednesdays, 8 am to 11 am

For more information, to discuss your upcoming travel needs, and/or make an appointment, contact Robin Gordon at 513-636-2152.





## Young Writers for Adoption

### A contest for young writers from adoptive families

The mission of the Young Writers for Adoption contest is to provide an opportunity for children, teens and young adults up to 21 years old who are either adopted, or a family member of an adopted child to express their feelings about family and adoption through their writing.

Maggie Gieseke, mother of 6 - 3 of whom are adopted, spearheaded this contest. The three essay topics included:

- What does the word “family” mean to you?
- What is your favorite way to spend time with your family?
- Your family wouldn't be the same without you. Why?



Some of the Young Writer finalists at the Passport to Forever benefit

The young writers submitted entries that were judged to be exceptional based on a point system developed specifically for this contest. The selected winners in each age category are:

#### Age 10 and under:

Adam Jutt  
Evangeline Price

Gabriel Fellerhoff  
Grace Trahan

#### Ages 11 to 13:

Allison Lampert  
Nathan Boerner

Abby Jutt  
Issac Cuozzo

#### Ages 14 to 18:

Annemarie Amlung  
Abby Docherty

Ben Chung  
Anastacia Stacey

#### Ages 19 to 21:

Rachel Chung  
Zach Kayes

Sarah Fanning  
Joe Koenig

Look for some of the essays and details about future contests to be included in upcoming IAC newsletters.

## Passport to Forever - continued

Donations are still being accepted. To give, please contact Britt Nielsen at [britt.nielsen@cchmc.org](mailto:britt.nielsen@cchmc.org) or 513-636-5647 for more information.

### Save the Date:

2013 Passport to Forever – Saturday,  
November 2, 2013 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

### Details:

For more information about how to get involved, contact Event Co-Chairs Nancy Kayes at [kayesfamily@cinci.rr.com](mailto:kayesfamily@cinci.rr.com) or Karen Sparling at [karen.sparling@cchmc.org](mailto:karen.sparling@cchmc.org).

1. Beth Ann Schnell with her daughter Mia (Russia)
2. Dr. Mary Allen Staat with her daughter Emily
3. "Year of the Dragon" stage decoration created by local students at Taylor High School
4. Juniper Lin McKnight (China) and Ethan Hoskins (Guatemala)
5. Alina Koenig (Russia), Marie Ling Meyers (China), and Ailsa Bever (Kazakhstan)
6. Ava and Emma Zigmunt (China) with Catarina Kenet (Guatemala)
7. Emily Bever (Kazakhstan), Xavier Nichols (Colombia), and Mia Schnell (Russia)
8. Yana Kemp (Russia) and Emmy Schmidt (China)
9. Olya and Pasha Pence (Kazakhstan)
10. Nicholas Johnson (Russia) and Samara Megerle (Russia)
11. Xander Berger (Korea) and Moses Wilguens Dor Browning (Democratic Republic of Congo)
12. Will and Andrew Bever (Kazakhstan)
13. Daniel Barkdoll (Honduras), Sibella Russell (China), and Luke Sebralla (Thailand)
14. Matthew, Peter and Mary Catherine Sebralla (Thailand)
15. Benjamin (China) and Mary Helen Strasser (Russia)
16. Ryan Barnes (Guatemala) and Rosie Gieseke (Ethiopia)
17. The Greater Cincinnati Chinese School entertained attendees with their dragon dance
18. Marin Flynn (Ethiopia) and Caitlyn Combs (China)
19. Christina Mihalek, Cincinnati Children's donor relations officer, Kate Furling, IAC board president, and Autumn Schmidt, raffle chair, sell holiday basket raffle tickets
20. Ellie Davis (Vietnam) and Elli Focht (Taiwan)
21. Jace Jones (Siberia) and Tate Jones (Ethiopia)
22. Reina and Maria Haas (Guatemala)
23. Nancy Kayes, event co-chair, Dr. Mary Allen Staat, IAC director, Shary Addison, Cincinnati Children's board of trustees member, Kit Andrews, Local 12 anchor and event emcee, and Karen Sparling, event co-chair

## Photos from the Passport





# to Forever Fashion Show and Dinner



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

# The 2012 Adoption Tax Credit: Ten Things You Should Know

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

## 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 and her husband Mark Bever are the proud parents of four children from Kazakhstan. They are also attorneys with the same Cincinnati Law firm - Schwartz Manes Ruby & Slovin.*

**An adoption 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 2012 is \$12,650. The purpose of the adoption tax credit is to offset “qualified adoption expenses” of taxpayers who adopted a child in 2012.
- 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 2012 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 \$189,710 and completely phases out at \$229,710.
- 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 2010 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 \$12,650.
- 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.



## Considerations When Adopting a Special Needs Child

Tisha Way, LISW-S, Mental Health Therapist



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

When choosing to adopt a special needs child, some parents are very aware of the extensive post-adoption needs the child will require. However, there can be many scenarios where the magnitude is not realized until the child can be evaluated once they arrive home. Due to institutionalization and deprivation in their home country, many internationally adopted children have global developmental delays when they first come home.

Many of these children progress well when introduced to good nutrition and developmentally-appropriate play, while some children may need OT, PT, or speech services to advance.

**In addition to developmental issues, special needs children often need close medical supervision which could require multiple weekly appointments for an extended period of time.**

Additionally, feeding assistance and surgical interventions may be needed. While special needs children benefit greatly from international adoption, many families can experience guilt in acknowledging the stress that comes along with the adoption.

We all read books, blogs, and Facebook pages of happy, adopted families. Social media does not show us the full picture, like how other children in the home are being impacted, the sleepless nights, temper tantrums, and fears of the future. Parents can often be led to believe that their feelings are wrong, or that there is something wrong with them. No, you do not need to create a blog or post your feelings on Facebook, however, honestly identifying your own stress and developing coping strategies is essential for both you and your child.

A 2010 study by Andre Viana and Janet Welsh published in *The International Journal of Behavioral Development* investigated parental stress among mothers of internationally adopted children. This study found that these adoptive mothers experienced a higher rate of stress and depression. Lower rates of stress and depression were associated with mothers who perceived a higher social support system and realistic expectations of the child. Another study in 2002 by McGlone, Santos, Kazama, Fong, & Mueller published in *Child Welfare*, focused on parental stress of adoptive parents of special needs children. Their research found that parental stress levels play a significant role in parent-child interactions, child behaviors, family cohesion, and general post-adoption adjustment.

**So where can a parent begin? First, focus on gradual progress rather than the gap that exists in your child's development and social-emotional levels.**

In any adoption, attachment and developmental issues are an evolving process. Consider creating a routine of celebrating small victories. Write these down so you can revisit them on the tough days.

Lean into your support system. Many people in our lives want to help, but need some direction. Resist the urge to appear self-sufficient. Accept a meal, help with transportation, or a cup of coffee. It won't fix everything, but ten minutes of adult conversation (with someone other than a doctor) can do wonders.

Don't be afraid to discuss these concerns during your IAC visits. This can be the first step in navigating these waters with professionals who understand and are here to help support you and your family.

## The IAC at a Glance

### Update from Dr. Mary Allen Staat, director



International adoption has seen many changes through the years, and just recently, as most of you have probably heard, Russia has officially closed to international adoption by US citizens. While their government is allowing some children whose adoptions had already been approved by a court to join their adoptive families in the United States, there will be no new adoptions.

With the ban in Russia and with more restrictions overall, the IAC is even more committed to helping adoptive parents make the best decisions for their families and circumstances. This includes exploring other options, such as adopting children with special needs and older children, as well as considering new countries now open to adoption.

In addition to children from China and Ethiopia, we are seeing children come home from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Ghana, Colombia, Haiti, India, the Philippines and Slovakia. No matter where the children come from, their age or medical needs, the IAC is here to provide support for these children and their families.

#### Here are other updates:

- We have recently introduced our International Health Services, which includes international travel preparation and vaccination for adults and children (see page 2 for details).
- We are adding another mental health therapist to the IAC team to join Tisha Way, our current mental health therapist, in response to the needs of our families.

Address Service Requested

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International

