

Passport



to the International Adoption Center (IAC)

July 2014

www.cincinnatichildrens.org/iac

The IAC makes national news- NBC's Today Show

Story headline- Program supports families with adoption

Dr. Mary Allen Staat, IAC director, her team, and an IAC family were featured on NBC's Today show and NBC News online in March of this year. Kate Snow, NBC national correspondent, made the trip to Cincinnati to take an inside look at the IAC program.

The story was a follow-up to a private re-homing series that NBC previously aired, to show that there are alternatives for parents who feel in over their heads, once they have adopted a child. As a stark contrast to re-homing (trying to find other homes for adopted children), the NBC producers spotlighted the IAC, its team and mental health services.

NBC aired the segment on March 21, 2014, to give families an option for help and support. Dr. Staat said that the mental health services provided by the IAC give adoptive parents like Shelli and John Giess a safety net. They adopted Braeden from Guatemala and Kyle from Russia and have experienced some behavioral challenges throughout the years. The family is featured in the segment in therapy sessions with Tisha Way, IAC mental health therapist. Shelli said, "They are teaching the kids skills they need to get through things, but they're also coaching us as parents."



Kate Snow talked about the IAC being a model for supporting parents before, during and after the international adoption process. Dr. Staat said, "We have spent the past 15 years building a program that is here to help families throughout their life. I would like it to be a model for other programs."

To see the story, go to cincinnatichildrensblog.org/in-the-news/international-adoption-center-a-model-of-support/, or google "International Adoption Center on Today Show."

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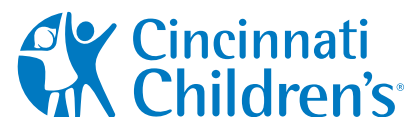
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1. Kate Snow, NBC national correspondent,
with Shelli and John Giess and their boys
Kyle and Braeden

2. Kate Snow interviewing Dr. Staat for the
Today Show



**Cincinnati
Children's**

International
Adoption Center

IAC STAFF MEMBERS

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

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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.

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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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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

2014 Passport to Forever- Passport to India

When: Saturday, November 8, 2014 (see back page for details)

Volunteers Needed: To get involved, or donate items for the silent or live auctions, contact the event co chairs - Nancy Kayes at kayesfamily@cinci.rr.com or Karen Sparling at karen.sparling@cchmc.org.



From left to right – Nancy Kayes, event co chair, with Dr. Mary Allen Staat, IAC director, Kit Andrews, Passport emcee and Local 12 News anchor, and Karen Sparling, event co chair, showing off baskets from the holiday basket raffle at a previous Passport event

Internationally Adopted Teens Support Group

- What:** A group meeting weekly, starting July 17, 2014 to allow internationally adopted teens an opportunity to further explore and discuss issues related to their adoption in a therapeutic setting
- Conducted By:** Andrea Bohlen, LISW-S, IAC mental health therapist
- Why:** Adolescence is typically a time when many adopted children begin to more fully explore thoughts, feelings, and questions related to their adoption and how it all fits into their forming identities. Topics covered throughout the duration of the group will include: exploring and sharing individual adoption stories, exploring feelings and emotions related to adoption, exploring adoption related questions, and discussion about birth parents, relinquishment, and identity.
- Who:** Internationally adopted teens 13 to 17 years old
- Where:** Medical Office Building (M.O.B.) – 5th floor, room 602, 3430 Burnet Ave. (down from the main hospital and across from the Ronald McDonald House)
- When:** Thursdays - 7/17, 7/24, 7/31, 8/7, 8/14, 8/21, 8/28, and 9/4 - from 6pm-7:30pm
- Contact:** Andrea Bohlen at 513-803-1741



Attendance may be covered by your insurance. If interested, Andrea can provide you with a form, to guide you through the process of confirming insurance coverage and determining any co-pay amounts.

Sibshop Workshops for brothers and sisters of internationally adopted children



- What:** Workshops geared towards brothers and sisters 8 to 12 years old of an internationally adopted child with special needs. Each session will include games, activities and peer support in a therapeutic setting. The workshops last 3 hours and cost \$10 (meal included).
- Why:** Siblings may struggle with:
- Changes in the family since the adoption.
 - Coping with their sibling's challenging behaviors.
 - Contending with their sibling's medical needs.
- When:** Thursday, August 14, 2014 from 4:30pm - 7:30pm
- Where:** Medical Office Building (M.O.B.) – 5th floor, room BE5.511, 3430 Burnet Ave. (down from the main hospital and across from the Ronald McDonald House)



Interested or Have Questions?:

Contact Andrea Bohlen at 513-803-1741.

Stories of hope, love and family

Kristy and Theo Kopf

“The year 2011 was monumental, life altering and simply wonderful, as I was entrenched in adoption,” said Kristy Kopf, mother to Gemechu Theodore “Theo” born in Asella, Ethiopia.

Kristy, who became a single mother in 2011, took a leap of faith to adopt internationally. Although it felt overwhelming at first, she found along the way that she had support from not

only her family and friends, but other single moms who were also adopting and sharing similar experiences. Her journey, which she chronicles in a blog, includes her disappointments, but overall, the sometimes challenging but joyous account of their lives as mother and son.

Here are a few snapshots in time from Kristy's blog:

March 2011:

“Ethiopia enacted a slow down, which in combination with the fact that my agency's referrals had slowed down to almost a halt, is very stressful....”

April 26, 2011:

“On this Tuesday, I had a hair appointment and was lamenting my misery to my hairdresser.... I antsy, impatient and frustrated.... I had received an email earlier in the day from Sally, my caseworker, with no new news.... I saw on my phone a call from area code 616.... I never answer my phone at the salon... but Bob understood and watched intently while I carried on a 5 minute, one-sided conversation with Sally. When I hung up, he asked if I had news..... I simply showed him the picture....”

July 19, 2011: Retuning to the US, after meeting Theo:

“The flights were long but the trek was amazing, and I met the love of my life...”

September 13, 2011: Embassy Clearance

“Once my paperwork was submitted to the Embassy, I hit a hurdle, a request for an additional document.... I then spent a series of 2 weeks waking up throughout the night to look at my Blackberry for an email from the US Embassy... The emails from the Embassy came in between 1-4 am.”

September 24, 2011: Welcome Home THEO...

“The return to Ethiopia was swift, and I was able to travel with some of my friends from the first trip and my mom. I was lucky enough to become a mom under the watchful and loving eyes of my mother.”

December, 2011:

“This year's holiday was quite simply amazing...to see the holiday through a child's eyes is a gift in itself.”

December 29, 2011:

“Theo has 3 new teeth...be careful what you wish for... WHEW this is tough....new teeth... not so fun. I am such a better parent at 9 a.m. as opposed to 4 am.”





May 13, 2012: Mother's Day:

"Sometimes it still amazes me...when this sweet little guy screams MAMA!"

December 6, 2012:

"Please don't judge me because my son just shared his spoon with our dog Buck ! In fact, it is often said dogs mouths are cleaner than humans.....yep, that is what I am going with."

October 16, 2013:

"It was never an option to stay at home....'tis the life of this single mama...But when I get a text in the middle of the day that tells me my picky eater tried and enjoyed a new food AND I get a picture that vibrates fun... well, I could not be happier that he goes to daycare."

February, 2014:

"This boy LOVES hockey. We have embraced winter sporting activities, sledding, skating, and attempts to snowboard by standing in the sled... He sleeps with 4 hockey sticks,

2 pucks, & a baseball glove. He whacks pucks (any small toy or object) all over the house and if he spies hockey on the TV... he stops to watch and imitate the players."

February 5, 2014: Theo Learns to Ice Skate

"Much to my surprise, after an hour of 'skating', Theo exited the ice.... I offered him my hands and he emphatically told me.... I got it! And he surely did.... I love my fearless and coordinated child. The best line of the day: 'I fall mama, then I get back up.' You keep doing that Sweet Theo, forever and ever."

April 18, 2014:

"My house needs painting .My dryer is slowly failing. I have many 1/2 completed projects in the basement. My 'to do' list is long....And yet when given a chance, we take off to visit friends, or the beach, or any interesting adventure. Sometimes I wonder if we should stay put, fix the house, buy a dryer. Instead, I always seem to choose the adventure."

1 *Meeting the love of my live"
Kristy and Theo in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*

2 *"A boy and his dog"
Kristy and Theo with Buck*

3 *"This boy loves hockey."
Theo and his hockey puck*

4 *"Friday night play dates with our best buddies ...who share a common Ethiopian heritage and cool single mamas!"*

Andrew and Roba Lippert with mom Beth, Theo and Kristy, and Gabriel Shaffer with mom Pamela Jean

Kristy continues to blog about her and Theo's day-to-day adventures, as they figure things out together. She and Theo gain support from her family and from friends - other IAC families who get together regularly for playdates. Their children share a common heritage, and they all proudly share the IAC in common. She said, "Adopting on your own takes a leap of faith and a network of support, but it is the best decision I ever made and the most amazing journey!"

Tips for creating structure during the summer months

Andrea Bohlen, LISW-S, mental health therapist



About Andrea Bohlen:

As an IAC mental health therapist, Andrea conducts diagnostic assessments of internationally adopted children, and counsels children and parents to foster post-adoption support and enhance well-being.

Andrea has a Master's degree in Social Work from the University of Cincinnati and a Bachelor's degree in Social Work from Bowling Green State University. She has extensive experience working with children in need of behavioral health services.

Her areas of focus include:

- ADHD
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Developmental and trauma disorders
- Attachment issues
- Mood disorders
- Executive functioning skills

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

After suffering one of the snowiest winters in Cincinnati history, I am sure many of you are looking forward to these warmer summer months. Summer can be a fun and exciting time as many families look forward to a break from the pressures of the school year, summer vacations, warmer weather, time at the pool, and being able to do outdoor activities together. However, while it may be a relief to no longer be shoveling driveways or be arguing with your child about getting their homework done, even the seemingly carefree days of summer come with their own unique set of challenges.

The summer months can be particularly challenging for children with special needs and behavioral and mental health issues, as these children typically benefit from structure, routines, and consistency which the school year most certainly brings.

For many of these children, a significant change in daily routine and lack of structure can lead to increased anxiety and increased problems with emotional regulation. While many parents do their best to keep some sort of structure and routines in place over the summer, trying to do this for months with any child can often be quite a challenge!

Here are just a few ideas to help create some structure in your child's day so that both you and your child can have a happy and enjoyable summer.

• *Create a daily schedule*

Creating a daily visual schedule together with your child is a good way to create some semblance of structure in the day and lets them know what to expect. This doesn't mean that you have to create a rigid minute by minute schedule for every moment of the day, but having a general list of activities throughout the day can be helpful in creating some order. Involving your child in the creation of the schedule is also a good way to share some control with your child, allow them to have some ownership over their day, and teach them organizational skills. The schedule can also include pictures or photographs representing each activity. The schedule should start with the first thing your child does when they get out of bed and can include daily chores, meal times, special projects, fun leisure activities, and any summer projects, camps, academic or extra-curricular activities they may be involved in throughout the summer.

• *Get your child involved in summer camps and summer programs*

Summer camps are a great way to help your child to explore their interests, meet other children with similar interests, and create structure in their day. Cincinnati Family magazine has a great online directory of camps and summer programs running throughout the summer for kids with a variety of interests. The list includes all-day camps, partial day camps, camps for kids with special needs, and even overnight and residential camps.

To view the directory go to

<http://cincinnati.familymagazine.com/directory-categories/camps/>.

- ***Keep your child engaged in learning***

Just because the school year is over doesn't mean that learning has to stop for your child. Keeping your child engaged in some type of academics and learning over the summer may also make it easier for your child to transition back to into the routine of school, once the school year begins again. Check with your child's school to see if they offer any additional academic programming or home practice for the summer. For example, Springer School offers "Adventures in Summer Learning" programs to help children strengthen their academic skills. Visit <http://www.springer-ld.org/summer> for more information. Taking advantage of our great local museums and attractions such as the Cincinnati Zoo is also a great way to keep your child learning and keep them entertained this summer. Check out the Cincinnati Museum Centers Free Fridays from 4-8pm on August 1 for a fun and educational experience for you and your family.

- ***Get your child involved in special projects***

Summer is a great time to take on special projects that you haven't been able to get to the rest of the year or have been putting off. Maybe you've always wanted to plant a vegetable garden, or have been meaning to box up items in your house to donate to Good Will or the Salvation Army. Getting your child involved in these projects will not only help keep them occupied but can also help you accomplish something in the process.





Save the Date

Mark your calendars!

- What:** 2014 Passport to Forever
Passport to India
- Date:** Saturday, November 8, 2014
- Time:** 6:15 pm: Cocktail Reception and
Silent Auction Begins
8:00 pm: Dinner and Program
- Where:** The Oscar Event Center at
Jungle Jim's in Fairfield
- Why:** To celebrate international adoptions
and raise money for the IAC



Tear or cut here

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Adoption Center

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