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U.S. Leaders in International Adoption Merge, Expand Resources

Holt International and World Association for Children and Parents Consolidate Efforts, Strengthen Impact for Families and Children Worldwide

EUGENE, OR, February 7, 2019 -- Holt International and World Association for Children and Parents (WACAP), two of the nation's leading international nonprofit adoption and child welfare agencies, today announced a strategic merger under the name Holt International Children's Services, effective April 1, 2019. This merger brings together more than 100 years of collective experience and expertise in child welfare and adoption, strengthening global impact by broadening support for vulnerable children and families in the U.S. and abroad.

Harry and Bertha Holt pioneered international adoption and founded Holt International in 1956. Holt has since grown year-over-year to serve hundreds of thousands of children and families worldwide through child-centered services including family strengthening, orphan care, and adoption. Leveraging its successful 40-year history in international adoption, WACAP has recently expanded a strategy to address the foster care crisis in Western Washington, through recruiting foster families and assisting with reunification efforts. Collectively, Holt and WACAP have placed more than 70,000 children worldwide in loving, permanent families through adoption.

"Holt and WACAP have established strong reputations as organizations providing unprecedented levels of care and support to children and families," said Phil Littleton, Holt International president and chief executive officer. "That commitment to personalized attention will remain steadfast, ensuring families currently in the process of adoption will be fully supported and that the transition will be as seamless as possible."

Many agencies focused only on international adoption have closed in recent years and others have struggled, with an 80 percent decline in adoptions since 2004, according to the U.S. Department of State. While Holt and WACAP have remained leaders in international adoption, the declines served as a catalyst for consolidation. Leveraging Holt's growth in child welfare efforts, the merger will allow both organizations to combine resources and



extend reach to more children and families with the child-centric work at the heart of each organization.

“From our inception, WACAP has focused on serving children, whether they live on the other side of the world or in our own communities,” said Greg Eubanks, president and chief executive officer of WACAP. “The ways in which we can provide permanency for children, however, continue to change. Through domestic foster care, and Holt’s family strengthening programs internationally, we can achieve permanency for children through reunification with or preservation of their biological families. When that isn’t possible, we stand ready with adoptive families to welcome children home,” said Eubanks. “I firmly believe we are better together.”

Holt’s care for orphaned and vulnerable children as well as family strengthening services include education, safe housing, nourishing food, as well as community advocacy and job skills training that help empower parents with the tools and resources they need to independently care for their children.

“Holt International, which pioneered intercountry adoption in the 1950’s, still strives to find homes for the world’s vulnerable children,” said Mark Montgomery, professor of economics at Grinnell College and co-author of *Saving International Adoption*, along with his wife, Irene Powell. “My wife and I adopted a child through Holt, and we understand why today they are among the most respected practitioners in the matching of children with families,” said Montgomery.

Holt International will assume management of WACAP operations in Seattle and associated branch offices in New York, Alaska, Connecticut, and Wisconsin from Holt’s headquarters in Eugene, OR. The merger will broaden Holt’s presence to a total of 17 states and 16 countries worldwide.

About Holt International

Holt International seeks a world where every child has a loving and secure home. Since Holt’s founding in 1956, the organization has worked towards its vision through programs that strengthen and preserve families that are at risk of separation; by providing critical care and support to orphaned and vulnerable children; and by leading the global community in finding families for children who need them and providing the pre-and post-adoption support and resources they need to thrive. Always, Holt focuses on each child’s unique needs —keeping the child’s best interest at the forefront of every decision.

About WACAP

WACAP’s vision is a family for *every* child. Since 1976, WACAP has helped more than 12,000 children find loving homes and permanency, and provided humanitarian aid to over 200,000 children worldwide. Widely recognized for excellence and high ethical standards, WACAP finds and prepares families to care for children, for a short time or a lifetime, offering lifelong support after adoption.