Dear Friends,

A loving family is the single most important factor in our lives. A family who laughs with us during the best of times, stands by us through the hardest moments, and sustains us, always.

Over the past year, I’ve traveled to several of the countries where WACAP works, and whether I’m meeting with government officials, talking with orphanage staff, or sitting with the children in an orphanage, I’m constantly reminded of the difference a family makes. While the children in institutional care have a roof overhead and caregivers who teach them and attend to their basic needs, they grow up without something absolutely vital: a family to nourish and comfort them. They wake up without the assurance of a family who loves them unconditionally, who will stand by them during the good times and the difficult ones.

When I traveled to Thailand in the spring, I met an orphaned 6-year-old boy who had been given a prosthesis because his legs were different lengths. Although his prosthesis was broken, he rode his bike happily; that’s when he wasn’t busy running or walking. I saw his joy as he played, but as I watched, it was seeing how much he needed a family that affected me the most; seeing how much a family’s support could change his future.

Guided by our vision, “A Family for Every Child,” WACAP finds parents for children like this spirited little boy, with a child coming home almost every day — and we celebrate every future brightened by the love of a family. With over 10,000 children coming home since 1976, we have so many reasons to celebrate.

As you read about some of WACAP’s activities throughout the past year and especially the stories of children who today are surrounded by the warmth of their families, we hope you’ll join us in remembering the kids who are not yet home.

Across the globe, there are over 150 million orphaned children. In the face of such need, we at WACAP look to our vision, undeterred in our resolve and recognizing the difference we can make together. It’s because of the commitment of so many staff, volunteers, families and supporters that it’s possible for WACAP to reach children like those whose stories you’ll read in the coming pages ... and those still hoping for a home to call theirs.

As we continue in the coming year to reach the children who wait for a family, we remember with joy the children who have come home ... and the special blessing only a family brings to us all.

Warmly,

Lillian Thogersen
President & CEO
206.575.4550

Our thanks to Yuen Lui portrait studios for this photo.
WACAP AUCTION BRINGS HOPE TO CHILDREN

Because of our dedicated supporters, this year’s Children’s Hope Gala and Auction, held November 17, 2012 at Seattle’s Four Seasons Hotel, generated over $250,000. The funds raised will support WACAP’s Promise Fund, helping us reach children across the globe who are in need of families and bring them into loving homes.

VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Vital to achieving our mission, the talents and contributions of WACAP volunteers help us reach children who need families every day. Over the past year, 50 office volunteers and 42 event volunteers donated 2,407 hours of their time!

A special thank you to you to Children’s Hope Auction committee volunteers who gave countless hours of time and creativity. Thank you to Chair Kellie Berndt and to committee members Pam Anderson, Sandi Lindstrom and Katie Barclay Robertson.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO GROUP HEALTH

We are grateful for the support of Group Health, presenting sponsor of the 2012 WACAP Children’s Hope Gala and Auction.

This annual event would not have been possible without Group Health’s generosity and commitment to reaching orphaned and vulnerable children with the hope of a brighter future and the love of a family.

SAVE THE DATE: MOTHER’S DAY BRUNCH

Celebrate Mom, Celebrate Family.

Join us at Seattle’s elegant Fairmont Olympic Hotel on Mother’s Day, May 12, 2013. Celebrate the special women in your life with a champagne brunch and with entertainment fashioned for this special day.

Visit www.wacap.org this spring for details.

STAY CONNECTED IN THE NEW YEAR

We’re online. If you haven’t already, come find us.

—Frequent our website: www.wacap.org
—Visit our Impact Blog: http://wacap.wordpress.com
—Follow us on Twitter: adopt_an_orphan
—Find WACAP on Facebook

Help Us Spread the Word

As a supporter, you’re our best ambassador! If you’d like to share about WACAP in your community, please contact us at wacap@wacap.org or 206.575.4550.
The voices of six brothers buzz, exchanging memories from the day they met. “We had Spaghetti with red sauce.” “You ran around like crazy and showed me everything!” “I was nervous.” “You were taller than I was expecting” “You had tears.” “You hugged me hard.” It was the day the Lester family built a tradition they celebrate each year, but captures the spirit they live by. The friendship of brothers. The growing of family. “Brothers Day.”

On April 10, 2009, Bemnet, Dagm and Bereket, siblings born in Ethiopia, first met their brothers Cole, Cade and Cutter. The moment remains vivid for their mom. “My sharpest memory, from the meeting of our children, is the first hug,” she recalls. “More than a hug, they ran to clutch each other. Each crying tears of joy on the front steps of our home.” As three brothers embraced three more, this first Brothers Day became one of the most important days for the family — and a yearly way to honor their growing bond.

Years before that spring day, Chris and Catrina could not have envisioned they’d become “a family, eight deep.” They’d talked about adopting before they knew they were able to have children by birth. After having three sons, they still planned to adopt a child (younger than their youngest). When WACAP’s Family Finders shared about WACAP’s commitment to keep siblings together and reached out to them about a group of older boys — brothers — who needed to be adopted together, the Lesters responded … and have found growing their family by three more to be their “greatest joy.”

Preparing Cole, Cade and Cutter, each three years apart in age, for three new siblings (with a similar age span), was not something Chris and Catrina approached lightly. WACAP supported the Lesters with classes, the couple role played with their kids at home and the family set up rooms for the three brothers soon arriving. “After they came home,” Catrina shares, “we did amazing.” Bereket, Dagm and Bemnet brought their knowledge of family and shared their traditions from Ethiopia. “And our family just multiplied,” Catrina adds. “I know other families whose transitions were more challenging, but we are so blessed.” Though raising six boys can be hard work with “messy moments like every family has,” the Lesters have no doubt that it’s worth it. And on Brothers Day, together they remember the loss that led Bemnet, Dagm and Bereket to join their family … and they celebrate how they have become so much a part of each other’s lives.

After three Brothers Day celebrations, Chris and Catrina can’t help but notice how their family has grown. Bemnet, a top student in Ethiopia, has excelled academically, advancing out of the English Language Learners program at his school. Social, athletic and resilient, he inspires his family with his persistence. Dagm has a forward momentum that both propels him and helps him grow. He infects his five brothers with his laughter (and awe-inspiring sports trivia knowledge, which accompanies his love of baseball). Inseparable friends with his brother Cutter, the two help each other develop their strengths and tackle their fears. Bereket loves to talk about Ethiopia with his family. A natural athlete, he enjoys keeping up with his older brothers. He’s filled with energy and creativity (fueled in part by peanut butter-honey sandwiches, his favorite), and this little boy who first attached exclusively to his mom, is now developing strong relationships with others.

“Cole (age 15), Bemnet (12), Cade (12), Dagm (9), Cutter, (9) and Bereket (6) all know … when push comes to shove, they each have five brothers to stand up for them,” their mom and dad say. They continue “teaching each brother daily why they are who they are and why the other brothers are who they are.”

But there are lots of reminders. As part of their Brothers Day tradition, every year, the family plants a tree — a companion to the apple tree they planted to celebrate that first meeting of brothers. Shoveling and digging together — mother, father and six brothers plant and tend another tree. It grows … a continued symbol of their roots, their growing branches, the fruit that each will bear and the reason they celebrate.
Ellie completed the family. Before she came, I always felt we had an empty chair at the table. Once she came home, there was a feeling that things were as they should be."

Kathy Weymiller,
WACAP Adoptive Parent

Ellie last summer (second from left), all smiles as she’s surrounded by her dad and mom and two big brothers, Ben and Alex.

Things As They Should Be

"Ellie completed the family. ... I always felt we had an empty chair at the table. Once she came home, there was a feeling things were as they should be," say Kathy and Peter Weymiller: Their daughter, adopted from Russia, became part of their family in 2005. Then a docile 10-month-old, Ellie’s now in the third grade, an energetic 8-year-old who “lives out loud.”

Before joining her parents and older brothers Ben (16) and Alex (18), Ellie lived nearly a year of her life in a baby home in Russia. Since the early 90s, WACAP has continued to find families for children living in Russian institutions, helping over 900 children find permanent homes. "Today, many children are now thriving with love of a family, but many children continue to wait in Russian institutions — some because they’re school-aged and others because of special medical needs. We continue to seek homes for each child who needs one, finding the right family for each child," says WACAP Executive Director Lillian Thogersen.

As an infant in need of a family, Ellie was thought to have had a heart condition, and although later tests in Russia confirmed no defect, Kathy and Peter reflect, "It would not have mattered — we were hooked and committed to her." When Ellie was 4 months, they traveled to meet her. After several hours on icy roads, they arrived, the warmth of the baby home rushing over them as they listened to staff share about Ellie’s background and waited anxiously to meet her. Finally, there Ellie was. She was light, the size of a baby younger than her age — and instantly Daddy’s girl. The couple cradled their daughter and she gazed back, curling her small lips into a smile.

Because of changes to Russian adoption law, the Weymillers couldn’t return to complete the court process until Ellie turned 9 months, so they waited and prepared while their daughter grew older: “Those delays can rattle your confidence, but WACAP’s communication and care was outstanding,” the family notes. Still, it was not until the plane touched down in L.A. that Kathy realized she’d resisted bonding completely with the daughter she held in her arms. “[I’d been] holding my breath something might go wrong and she was not yet ‘ours.’ Once we landed, this flood of relief hit like a tidal wave and the tears just came. ... That was the first moment I believed I was her mom,” Kathy recalls. “Ellie slept right through that magical moment.”

With the waiting and traveling over, the Weymillers settled into their new routine, but found Ellie was suffering from anemia and low muscle tone, and not engaging through sound. “But all of that corrected itself very quickly just by being part of a busy family,” her mom marvels. The family can hardly remember Ellie as the child who “would not move and explore or play,” because today she’s “fearless ... climbs too high, swims too deep.” She manages to keep plenty of spunk and spirit on reserve for her brothers’ football games. With dreams of being a cheerleader, she’s a big fan of her gymnastics class (while piano class, she accepts). She’s very much a little sister to her big brothers — their biggest fan who occasionally gets into things or “wants to watch little kid shows when they are craving ESPN. But somehow they always work out their differences,” their mom notes.

This gift Ellie has for engaging others warms the hearts of her family. In preschool, Ellie was part of an inclusive classroom where she built relationships with diverse groups of kids. (Half the class had significant needs and half, including Ellie, were typically developing). At one of Ben and Alex’s baseball games, Kathy recalls, Ellie brightly approached one group of spectators who’d arrived earlier. They were in wheelchairs and had varying special needs, and most adults and ballplayers were walking wide around them. “Not, Ellie. She did not see disabilities. She saw new friends,” Kathy says. “She marched right up, saying, ‘I’m Ellie. What’s your name? I’m here to watch baseball. Be sure to cheer for the blue team – that’s my brother’s team. ...’ … Not long after, the players began to follow her lead. Ellie taught them to see people, not differences.”

As Ellie continues to demonstrate a spirit that’s earned her the name “firecracker” among those she meets, her parents couldn’t be prouder of the little girl who brings such sparkle to their lives.
“Even though at times, we wondered if we were strong enough to take on ‘special needs,’ we have been so richly blessed by all of our experiences ...”

Meegan Carlson,
WACAP Adoptive Parent

A Joy That Grows

“I just sent you an email with a photo and information about a child who’s waiting for a family.” Meegan Carlson remembers the call from WACAP she and her husband were waiting for: They’d envisioned the phone might ring when they were home one evening, and they’d reflect quietly together about the child who may join their family. Instead the call reached Meegan at work. A nurse in the hospital’s busy cardiac unit, Meegan could hardly find time to step away, and when she did sit down to a computer, it seemed to her ages had passed. Finally, an expressive little girl’s picture flashed onscreen, and Meegan couldn’t explain how, but she knew it: “This is my girl.” Miles away, Rob Carlson was looking at the photo, too — and later that evening, said the same thing: “yes.”

Goldyn came home in the fall of 2010, the Carlson family grew to seven, and as Meegan notes, all their hearts flooded with joy.

Goldyn — an animated, tenacious 3-year-old her parents call “sugar and spice” — was born in China with a cleft lip and palate. Like the thousands of children in China currently in need of a home, she spent longer waiting for her family because of her special need.

As Goldyn waited for the right family for her, WACAP staff and the Family Finders team were talking with the Carlsons about adopting a child from China and helping them learn what adopting a child with a correctable special need would involve. “We wondered if we were strong enough to take on ‘special needs,’” Meegan recalls. With four children at home, they ultimately decided the timing may not be right to adopt a child with a cleft and were just notifying WACAP as WACAP was reaching out to find Goldyn’s family. “The instant we saw her, we had total peace that this was the little girl for us.” Meegan shares. “We have been so richly blessed by all of our experiences and we urge others who may be pondering adopting a child with special needs to say, ‘yes’; you may never know how much your heart can grow until you do.”

But when traveling to bring their daughter home, they were worried; she was ill, had double ear infections and had lost weight from the last photo they’d seen. “I had the same feeling as the moment of childbirth, this overwhelming ‘mama bear’ instinct. ..., “Meegan remembers. “We knew she didn’t understand our words, but we kept saying over and over, ‘We are your mommy and daddy; we loved you before you even met us, and we will take care of you from this day on!’” Within 10 hours of coming home, safe in the arms of her mom and dad, Goldyn received prompt pediatric care, and she was already scheduled for an evaluation at Children’s Hospital. Before long, the family also was meeting Goldyn’s craniofacial team.

After successful surgery on her palate (with another scheduled this spring), Goldyn’s flourishing. “We’re so proud of her,” her parents say. “To go to so many appointments and surgeries and come out stronger on the other side has taught our family so much. Life with Goldyn has made our family even closer ... and better, in every way.”

After a year of speech therapy, Goldyn — now in preschool with a budding vocabulary — is on the go, and with no signs of stopping. Despite her history of ear problems, she’s passing her hearing screenings. She’s fond of shopping, cooking, cleaning and play time with her big sister. With a keen sense of style, this 3-year-old asks daily to wear pink (with a preference for tu-tus) ... but she also happily dons her cowboy boots for a ride on the John Deere.

“She is a true princess in our eyes,” her parents note, recalling fondly one of the many special moments with their daughter: “One day after she was learning to talk, she belted out, ‘Mommy, I love you with my whole heart’ ... She still says this often and she knows she is loved with our whole hearts, too.”

Goldyn, happy to be home with her mom and dad.
“Now I have parents. I feel safe. I am not lonely anymore.”

Thawit Nelson, WACAP Adoptee

The Perfect Fit

“Why do you love me?” 13-year-old Thawit asked his parents. (Several days earlier, Lynn and Carl Nelson were on a plane to Thailand to meet the son they’d been waiting for since 2008.) “Because you are a good boy and kind ...” Lynn responded, telling Thawit more about why they already loved him. Their son pondered a moment, then replied, “I love you because you love me.”

Thawit had already called his parents from the boys’ home a couple days before, just to make sure they’d still be arriving at 11:30 a.m. to pick him up before the adoption board meeting. He added, “You know, gates open at 6 a.m.” (He wondered, smiling, why they hadn’t friended him on Facebook already; he’d had an account since he first turned 13.)

Because of his age, Thawit waited longer for a family, but WACAP’s Family Finders team didn’t give up on looking for the right family for him. Since more adoptive parents seek to adopt younger children, school age boys and girls often remain in institutional care, some growing too old to be adopted according to their country’s adoption laws. Beyond that, most orphanages don’t have the resources to provide higher education and job training, so kids who “age out” often enter the world with limited preparation and without the vital support of a family.

“Thawit was about to ‘age out’ and it was hard for me to believe he hadn’t been adopted yet,” Carl recalls. He and Lynn were initially considering adopting a toddler, but while attending a WACAP adoption class, they saw the Waiting Child listing WACAP had prepared and learned about Thawit. Not only did he share Carl’s birthday, but both Lynn and Carl felt an instant connection to this charismatic boy. “We hadn’t thought about adopting an older child, but ... all the pieces seemed to fit together,” and as older parents, Carl reflects, “We were about to ‘age out’ ourselves.”

The Nelsons worried a little about adopting a teen, but also wondered if their family would grow in more than number. “[W]e quickly found that Thawit wanted a family as much as we did. ... He immediately began planning family activities, and hasn’t stopped,” his dad says. Meanwhile, Lynn delights that her teenage son is ever happy to offer a hug or I love you. “Our family has a lot more love, fun, experiences and meaning since Thawit joined it,” she affirms.

Thawit, or Tin Tin, embraced family from the start. When Carl and Lynn first arrived at the boys’ home, Thawit, beaming, strode out to meet them. He couldn’t wait to arrange a family style meal with them in Thailand. Their “activities coordinator,” as he’s known, came home last May, and he’s already planned a family road trip, tasking himself with researching RVs, activities, gear and destinations. It’s not just vacation memories this trio now enjoys, but creating adventures in real time. Both Lynn and Carl say the world is Thawit’s oyster, and, with Thawit, it’s theirs, too. “Our life is much fuller now,” Lynn shares. They’re actively involved in school and athletic events and have built new relationships with their neighbors. “We are a part of the community in ways we couldn’t have been before,” they note. Before they considered adopting, Lynn remembers, “I had given up on having a family. ... Without WACAP, the prayers of our friends, and God’s help, none of this would have happened.”

What amazes them every day is how well they fit together: Thawit is a sponge for new experiences: travel, rap, basketball shoes, technology, the Green Bay Packers, you name it. As he seeks out the world with his family supporting him, he says, “I feel more comfortable doing lots of things.” Thawit, now in eighth grade, is proud of how much English he’s learned in just one year, excelling from Basic to Advanced English on his ELL tests, and ending the school year with a 3.8 average. His determination follows him from the classroom to the basketball court and football fields.

Even on the day Carl first met his son, Thawit’s warmth and confidence shone through: “Thawit looked as if our being a successful family were already a done deal,” Carl says. Thawit explains his side, too, “Now I have parents. I feel safe. I am not lonely anymore.”
BRINGING CHILDREN HOME

US Kids

“We decided to go into the US Kids program and WACAP sprang into action; cognizant of our shaky hope, they built upon that and built us up. ... It was in the end, the best thing that happened to us. We got our beautiful daughter.”

Candice Becker-O’Hara, 
WACAP Adoptive Parent

The cries of newborns echoed the corridors at the local interim care center — a pediatric facility that cares for infants with prenatal drug exposure and medical needs. Staff bustled about, tending to fragile little ones. It was July of 2011, and Candice and Kevin O’Hara were visiting the center for the first time. Their WACAP case manager had called about a little girl who needed a family, and they’d studied the photo WACAP sent of a sleepy newborn — a little girl with a nevus (birthmark) on her face who’d also been exposed prenatally to narcotics. Since receiving the picture, Candice had a feeling … they were going to meet their daughter.

While initially planning to adopt internationally, the couple decided to pursue foster-adoption through WACAP’s US Kids program in early 2011. US Kids finds permanent homes for children in U.S. foster care, where in Washington state alone, 1,500 children (with their birth parents’ rights terminated) wait for families. Foster to adopt opportunities allow kids to be first fostered by the family seeking to adopt them — while the state is in the process of determining the legal status of their birth parents — and then adopted if and when the children become legally available. Foster children who are not adopted often grow up without the stability of a permanent home: those without permanent families may live with up to two different foster families for every year in state care, attending as many as seven different schools through grade 12.

While the infants at the care center fought against the odds, the stakes were higher for those without a family. Though Candice and Kevin were open to bringing home a child with a special need, the reality of welcoming a newborn and immediately becoming a family began to set in, and they had questions about the legal unknowns and next steps. Still, the couple walked into the nursery together, and when they met Sabrina, she became all that mattered. “I will never forget that moment. Ever. The room faded away. ... She had found me. My magic girl, with her ‘fairy kiss’ (what we called her birthmark).” As the clamor of the nursery melted into background, the O’Haras felt like they had come home. “I was lost in her; that is until my husband called me a baby hog and demanded to take his turn,” Candice remembers. “A piece of my puzzle heart was being filled in. I never knew you could love someone so very much in that one instant.”

Flourishing in the love of her adoptive parents and with no lasting drug-related effects from her early exposure, Sabrina continues to do well. The now 1- and 1/2-year-old has had surgery for her nevus: a four-month surgical process that’s required a few Chicago trips, but also revealed Sabrina as a champion flyer. Today, her nevus is almost completely gone, with only one surgery remaining.

Even considering life’s early challenges and surgeries, Sabrina astounds her family with her tenacity. Aware and engaged from the day she came home, she still enjoys being in the middle of things, which helps make every day a favorite for the O’Haras — “a mix of laughter, exasperation, life and love” that Sabrina dances to. “It is so exciting, the things that I want to share with her, the things that I get to share with her now,” her mom says. “I thought I had a full and rich life before her. ... Now though, with Sabrina, it has changed to something bigger and brighter.”

There’s the laughter of a 1-year-old. There’s the music she makes. WACAP found us our daughter,” mom and dad say, joyfully. “She is Sabrina. We are her parents. There was before and then there is now. ... She is a beautiful soul.”
Some of our favorite items to see in WACAP’s mailbox and email inbox are the messages and photos families send. We’re delighted to have received so many seasons’ greetings from families with tidings about how much children have grown up, and how much families have grown together over the past year. Here are a couple of the messages we’ve received this fall.

**We’d love to hear from you and share your stories with others. Please contact us at development@wacap.org.**

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**A Note From Laura and Michael**

In May of 2004, the Greers welcomed 2-year-old Sasi into their family. Sasi, born with one ear and whose motor skills and language development were a year behind her peers when she came home, today is thriving with the support and love of her family. We were delighted to receive this update:

> It dawned on me that we had not sent you a picture of Sasi, our daughter adopted from India through WACAP, in a while. She is now in the fifth grade, up to grade level, and VERY social. She rakes lawns to raise money for the “hurt puppies and sick kids.”

> I am so proud of her. She is a beautiful, well adjusted, happy goofball. We consider WACAP to be part of our family. I know, as a social worker myself, how you don’t always get the updates you would like. So here is Sasi’s.

> Thanks forever,

> Laura

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**A Story from Jacob**

This fall, we received the gift of Jacob’s story. Jacob was born in Thailand with cerebral palsy and waited over four years to be adopted. Now 12 years old, he hopes the story he wrote can help others see what a difference adoption makes and can help another child waiting for a family to come home.

> From Jacob’s Story "The Day the Changed My Life"

> I saw other kids getting adopted and I couldn’t help but think, “When will I have a family of my own?” If you were a orphan and you were wanting a family, how would you feel just waiting there at the orphanage? ...

> Because of the adoption, I have a brother, two sisters, a mom, a dad, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends who love me and care for me.

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**A Thank You From Cathy**

Shruthi was adopted from India in March of 2010 at 4 years old. With Shruthi’s special needs — which included limb differences, a cleft lip and palate, eye issues, and club feet (many related to a rare congenital condition called Larsen syndrome), WACAP’s Family Finders knew finding her family would be a challenge, but didn’t give up. The love and commitment of her adoptive parents, Cathy and Bob Reed, changed Shruthi’s life.

On a visit to the WACAP office in November, Shuthi heartily greeted staff as she walked through office using her walker, and later warmed the hearts of our attendees at WACAP’s Children’s Hope Auction. How wonderful it was to hear Shruthi’s story and receive this message from Cathy.

> We will always support WACAP. ... The commitment you all made to Shruthi from the beginning is the reason she has her family and all the medical care she needs. ... Hats off to WACAP because you all live your motto!

> --Cathy

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October 2012; visit our Impact Blog at http://wacap.wordpress.com to read more about Sasi.

October 2012; visit our Impact Blog at http://wacap.wordpress.com to read more of Jacob’s story.

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October 2012; visit our Impact Blog at http://wacap.wordpress.com to read more of Cathy’s story.
ADOPTION PROGRAMS

Bulgaria – Our newest adoption program opened just over a year ago, and now our first family is traveling to meet their child. Families, including single applicants, are welcome to apply, and we’re excited to be seeking families for 60 waiting children, 22 of whom are waiting to be adopted with their siblings.

China – WACAP found adoptive families for over 130 children, a third of whom were age 6 years or older when they came home! At least half of these children were boys. WACAP’s case managers work closely with each family to find the child who is right for them.

In the summer, the China Center for Children’s Welfare and Adoption (CCCWA) invited WACAP to visit several orphanages where staff met with over 200 waiting children — many of whom are school-age or have more complex special needs. This past fall, WACAP was honored to host a delegation of 20 Chinese officials, who attended a WACAP panel of adult adoptees from China during their visit. The panelists, age 14 to 29, generously shared their experiences being adopted, telling the story of how they adjusted to a new family, to school and to life in the U.S.

Ethiopia – Thirty three children came to their adoptive families in 2012, including 12-year-old twins! WACAP hosted a celebration for visiting officials from Ethiopia’s Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MOWA) this year, as well as welcomed WACAP Director in Ethiopia Ato Teklu Abera and his wife this summer.

India – India’s central authority overseeing adoptions has implemented new procedures designed to reach more children who need families and streamline adoption. And we celebrated over a dozen children who came home to their adoptive families this year.

Korea – Korea has begun implementing its new law on adoption, and the country is now seeing its first adoptions processed through family court (with families now receiving legal custody of their child once the court process is completed).

IN OTHER WACAP NEWS

Hague Accreditation: This summer, WACAP was again certified by the Council on Accreditation (COA) for meeting the accreditation standards set by the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption (an international agreement that creates standards and safeguards related to international adoption to protect the best interests of children and adoptive families). As we continue to provide adoption services, we are honored to be recognized for upholding the highest ethical, legal and professional standards.

Building Improvements: We’re grateful to the Employees Community Fund of Boeing Puget Sound for its 2012 grant to help with accessibility and security upgrades to WACAP’s building and grounds. Also, five volunteers from Casey Family Programs recently offered a hand, volunteering as part of United Way’s Day of Caring.

Taiwan – WACAP’s second newest adoption program celebrated the first children coming home to their family — a group of three siblings — and has several more in the process of being adopted.

Thailand – In March, WACAP Executive Director Lillian Thogersen and Thailand Program Manager Liz Sheth traveled to Thailand, visiting orphanages in Bangkok, Khon Kaen and Udon Thani. Several Thai children came home to their adoptive families this year, including two older children with hearing loss.

Russia – WACAP’s Russia program continues to serve children through adoption in Tatarstan and Novosibirsk. Several adoptive families have either come home with their children or have traveled on a first or second trip. This popular program expects to bring home many more children this year.

In November, the Agreement between the United States of America and the Russian Federation Regarding Cooperation in Adoption of Children entered into force. This cooperative agreement upholds both countries’ commitment to a transparent, safe and ethical adoption process for adoptive families, birth families, and children.

US Kids – WACAP is helping children find the stability of a permanent home sooner through foster-adoption, and in many cases, kids are able to come home at younger ages (with seven kids under age 3 joining their families last year).

US Kids has continued its partnership with King 5 Television (Seattle’s NBC affiliate) on A Family For Me, a program where children in Washington state foster care share about the family they’re dreaming of. Since 2005, over 200 of the children featured on A Family For Me are now with loving families.

Evergreen Award: WACAP was named the winner of the 2012 Evergreen Award, awarded by the Alliance for Nonprofits Washington. The honor goes to one organization annually for creating community and cultivating Washington’s nonprofit sector.

2012 Events: Mother’s Day Brunch (Seattle Fairmont Olympic Hotel, Wash.) was a delight, drawing hundreds who enjoyed good food and a style show hosted by the children of WACAP as they showcased the hand-sewn fashions of Dress a Girl Around the World. Family Fun Day enjoyed a venue change to Wild Waves theme park (Federal Way, Wash.), thrilling nearly 300 adventurers of all ages. Family Camp at Sun Lakes Resort (Wash.) also drew 300 people — a merry summer celebration of family. WACAP’s Children’s Hope Auction and Gala at Seattle’s Four Seasons Hotel, Wash.) welcomed over 300 friends and supporters who together raised over $250,000 for WACAP’s Promise Fund.
Join Hands With WACAP

Finding a family for a child who needs one can sound like a pretty daunting task. When a child lives in an orphanage halfway around the world, how can you evaluate what that child might need from a family? And once you know, how do you find the family that can meet those needs? At WACAP, we know that as long as we have the resources to continue finding families, there is no child who is "unadoptable."

Did you know that with just an hour or two a week, you can help build those resources, allowing us to bring more children home to loving families? It's easy to set up an online fundraising page, and get your friends and family involved in supporting WACAP! If you have a little time, you could host a dinner party or organize a fun run, benefitting WACAP.

One WACAP board member asked friends and coworkers to sponsor him in a race. He ended up raising over $3,000 to donate toward WACAP’s Promise Fund!

WACAP’s Fundraiser-in-a-Box, available at www.wacap.org, is full of ideas on how to raise funds and organize support for WACAP so that we can continue working toward our vision of "A Family for Every Child."

With the funds you raise, you’ll help provide the resources for WACAP to:

- Identify the children most in need of adoption
- Travel to foreign countries and meet children face-to-face, so we can better understand their needs and be more successful in finding the right family
- Expand our outreach to potential adoptive families across the country
- Provide assistance for families if fees present barriers to bringing a child home

We hope you’ll reach out to your loved ones and Join Hands with WACAP! You’ll make an immeasurable difference in children's lives.

IN HONOR OF

Donations have been made in honor of the following children and other members of the WACAP family. These funds will be used to continue adoption services and humanitarian aid to children who need families in the countries WACAP serves. We welcome your donation to WACAP. Just visit www.wacap.org, or use the envelope included in this issue of WACAP Today.

Adelina Gill
Alex Dugdale
Amanda Ashley
Amy Eldlund Smith
Andrea Spencer
Antonina Schubert
Avva Buchanan
Avva Long
Becky Lanning
Benjamin Michaels
Brent Wood
Bridget Marie Jieyan
Bremenour
Chloe Choi
Christopher Spencer
Clark Ashley
Colby Denis Pease
Dana Lueck-Mammen
David Lueck-Mammen
Dee Jetter
Deepa KonaKanchi
Edward Lanning
Ellie Larsen
Emily Boersma
Emily Dugdale
Gea Lynn Clegg
Hank Spencer
Hannah Geldin
Irina Nicole Day
Jade Rose Sutton
Jade Xin Ting Plichta
Jaine Huenergard
Jessica Spencer
Justin Rocha
Kachi Abbott
Kara Anthony-Price
Kathleen Rocha
Katya Stowell
Kimberly Arato
Kimiko Ann Reid
Laura Lian Balcerak
Lola Richmond
Loren Toews
Lyndon Toews
Madison Phillip
Vladimir Treat
Margaret Sheela Redden
Mariya Bridget Redden
Mei Wilson
MiLee Jan Reid
Ming Rose Cooke
Molly Mayer
Morgan Alexi Valentina
Treat
Nicholas Boersma
Nicholas Sergey Van Hoven
Nicola Gill
Opal Violet Sutton
Patrick Yue Sutton
Pearl Lily Sutton
Pete Mondzelewski
Ptarmigan Abbott
Rachel Nikitha
Sunderaraj
Roopa KonaKanchi
Ryan Clabby
Sai Jetter
Samantha Karolina
Louie
Sarita Shruthi
Sarita Toews
Sera-Kim Huenergard
Shruthi Toews
Sonja Boersma
Sophie St. Jacques
Tessa Anthony-Price
Victoria Kristina Louie
Winter Abbott
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“My Family” by Emma Lin Manley, age 8, adopted from China in 2005. Thank you, Emma, for sharing the gift of family with us.

(Visit our blog at http://wacap.wordpress.com to see more children’s artwork celebrating family.)