



# WIDE HORIZONS

Spring 2008

The newsletter of Wide Horizons For Children, Inc.

## What's Inside...

### Family Stories

**A PERFECT FIT FOR OUR FAMILY**  
~ Korea

**THE JOY OF OUR LIVES**  
~ Ethiopia

**MEANT TO BE**  
~ Russia

**A NEW PLAN**  
~ Philippines

### A Closer Look

**RESPONDING TO THE CHANGING  
WORLD OF ADOPTION**

**HOW WHFC HELPS FAMILIES  
NAVIGATE CHANGES & DECISIONS**

### Today's Adoption Journey

**ADOPTION & CHILD WELFARE  
PROGRAM NEWS -  
A CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION!**

### Horizon Kids

**WHFC'S WAITING CHILDREN**

### Calendar of Activities

For the latest program news & updates, visit our website and subscribe to our e-newsletters at [whfc.org](http://whfc.org)

## Family Story ~ Korea

### A PERFECT FIT FOR OUR FAMILY



by Greg & Kimberley B

We now have two bio kids, James and Elisabeth, one daughter from China, Lottie Li, and the newest member of our family, Emma Eun-Ji Jane, from South Korea. We originally had our dossier logged into China for a second adoption when I decided to view the waiting children for Wide Horizons. Emma was the first child on the list and I knew immediately she was our daughter. My husband questioned my decision at first but thought I should try and find out some information on her. I personally didn't need any information, I knew God sent me to this agency to find our daughter. She was a perfect fit for our family.

I began to read about toddler adoption and all that it entails but no book could have prepared me for what Emma had gone through. She was with her birthmother for the first 18 months of her life and came to our family at the young age of 23 months. She was so scared at the airport in Austin, Texas that she passed out cold from screaming and slept until we arrived in Dallas. At first she was always happy during the day but had night terrors, screaming for her foster mother in her sleep and thrashing so much that I could hardly hold onto her. I e-mailed Maryanne Ludwig at WHFC, our personal angel with wings, and she assured me that this was necessary for her to work through her grief. I had read about night terrors but our daughter from China never experienced this when we brought her home. After a few months her night terrors began to fade but she began

having extreme rage during the day. I called them "out of body experiences" and I could not reach her at all when she was in the middle of one. A year later all of this anger and rage is gone. I won't say it will be completely gone because I really have no idea! I can look back in our pictures over the last year and see the difference in her expressions now and how relaxed and happy she truly is with our family. She and her sister are close in age and very close as sisters. They love each other very much, there has been very little jealousy... just a lot of love!



I tell you this about attachment/ bonding not to scare you but to inform you and pray that you educate yourselves as much as possible. Grief in adoption can come at any age not just toddlers or older children, it can also happen to infants. Emma's past is very important to us as is her future. She came to us with a story and a family. We write letters and send pictures to her birthmother through WHFC and have really no way of knowing if she will view them or not but to us because she gave life to Emma we are connected to her and she is also our family. \*

Visit [whfc.org/events](http://whfc.org/events) to register for meetings & events, view additional events, and see recaps of past events

### WHFC Events

- May 8: MA – Baby Care 101 - *Needham*
- May 13: CT – Your Child's Medical History - *W. Hartford*
- May 17: CT – Come Fly With Us: Kite Flying/Picnic - *Waterford*
- May 17: VT – Kids Day - *Burlington*
- May 20: NY – Sign with Your Child - *Loudonville*
- June 20: NY – Understanding Your Child's Medical Record - *Stephentown*
- June 7: NJ – NJ Family Picnic at Turtle Back Zoo - *W. Orange*
- June 8: RI – RI Family Picnic - *Bristol*
- June 9: MA – Your Child's Medical History - *Waltham*
- July 26: NY – W.MA/Albany Summer Picnic - *Grafton*
- August 9: NH – Play & Picnic In The Park - *Allenstown*

### UPCOMING

- October 4: MA – **3<sup>rd</sup> annual Eastern European Culture Camp**
- November 8: MA – **2<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL LATIN AMERICAN CULTURE CAMP**
- November TBD: W.MA – **Parade of Nations: A Multicultural Fair**

### UPCOMING ADOPTION INFORMATION MEETINGS

- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| S. Norwalk, CT   | Montclair, NJ*   |
| W. Hartford, CT* | Albany, NY       |
| Beverly, MA      | NYC, NY*         |
| Braintree, MA    | Oyster Bay, NY*  |
| Holyoke, MA      | White Plains, NY |
| Needham, MA*     | Providence, RI*  |
| Pittsfield, MA*  | S. Kingston, RI  |
| Westborough, MA  | Brattleboro, VT  |
| Rockville, MD    |                  |
| Bedford, NH*     |                  |
| Portsmouth, NH   |                  |

\* Held at a WHFC Office

FOR DATES, TIMES & LOCATIONS, PROGRAM-SPECIFIC WEBINARS & TELECONFERENCES, & CONFERENCES WHFC WILL ATTEND VISIT [WHFC.ORG/EVENTS](http://WHFC.ORG/EVENTS)

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR ADOPTION PROGRAMS THROUGH LIVE, ONLINE & ON-DEMAND PRESENTATIONS AT [WHFC.ORG](http://WHFC.ORG)

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Manhattan, NY • (212) 967-9808  
Oyster Bay, NY • (516) 922-0751  
Troy, NY • (413) 448-8367  
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*Watch our website for details*

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## Responding to the Changing World of Adoption

**An Interview with Vicki Peterson,  
Executive Director of External Affairs**

To read the complete article describing the evolution of both international and domestic adoption, visit our website, [www.whfc.org](http://www.whfc.org)

### Q: How have you seen the process of international adoption evolve?

A: I began working in adoption almost 30 years ago when adopting internationally was just starting to become a recognized option. Initially, the challenge was finding prospective parents for needy children from other countries. Over time, enormous changes have taken place.

### Q: What types of changes have you seen?

A: In recent years many countries have had a growing concern regarding a shrinking youth population. To keep more children within their borders, some governments are now offering incentive programs to encourage adoption by their citizens. In addition, they have increased restrictions on overseas applicants, making the prospect of international adoption much more daunting than ever. In particular, the adoption of young children by single parents has been greatly limited, and in many cases excluded. Recent restrictions have been placed on age requirements and the number of children in the home. Additionally, many countries have become less accommodating to applicants with medical, psychological or legal issues.

### Q: How can a prospective adoptive family cope with change?

A: The flexibility of prospective parents is more important than ever before. Keep in mind that there are millions of children over the age of two who need a family. If you are starting the adoption process, it will be helpful to review all your options with your social worker. Don't eliminate any program where you meet the criteria. Also, consider dual applications with the understanding that you will adopt from the first option that works for you.

Talk through the possibility of adopting an older toddler (2-3 years), a preschool-age child (4-5 years) or a child who is over the age of 5. Look at the possibility of adopting a 'waiting' child - one who is already identified and needs a family who can cope

with their age, risk, special condition and/or circumstance. Consider children from different backgrounds and cultures. The more expansive you can be in the type of child you are open to considering, the more options you will have and the more quickly the process will move along.



Vicki visiting an orphanage in China

Whenever possible, take advantage of our pre-adoption education programs. These discussions and readings will answer many questions and help reinforce your long-range goal of adoption.

### Q: What advice would you give families who are considering adoption?

A: Despite challenges that may lie ahead, adoption still remains a very successful way to build a family while providing a home for a child who might otherwise go without love and security. The wait for a child may seem long at times, but it leads to many years of fulfillment. It is important to stay focused on the long-term goal of becoming a parent. Rest assured, if adoption is the right decision for you, we will help you during every step of the journey ahead.

## How WHFC Helps Families Navigate Changes & Decisions. . .

While your caseworker will be your main source of current information, WHFC offers many other ways to gather information and respond to changes:

- Program information changes are regularly posted on our website, [www.whfc.org](http://www.whfc.org)
- View our online program-specific presentations
- As applied clients to the agency, you will receive monthly updates from your program team
- Our pre-adoption education programs offer discussions & readings that will help prepare you for the journey
- Network with adoptive families to gain insight into their experience of adoption
- Consider an additional application to another country - doing so may enable you to move through the stages of adoption more quickly

# Today's Adoption Journey

Dear Friends,

Developing adoption and child welfare programs in new countries is one of our most important activities at WHFC. It takes many months, and often years, of planning, research and effort to bring a new program to our families. So when we experience the rewards of our efforts, it is cause for celebration!

We are pleased to announce our newest program in Taiwan. We are currently seeking families for children over age 5 and for children of any age with special needs. Although new, this program is already very important to our mission and we are hopeful our partnership with Taiwan will allow us to reach many children in coming years.

More than five million Ethiopian children have been orphaned due to famine, war and disease. This year we reached important milestones in only our fifth year of operation in Ethiopia. We recently celebrated the placement of our 500th child and expect to place an additional 200 children with loving families this year.

Your donations to our humanitarian aid efforts in Ethiopia reach many children who will never be adopted. We will soon reach the 1,000-child mark for child sponsorships, helping to ensure these children are adequately fed, clothed and educated.

Your donations also funded the creation of a mother and child health clinic in Shebedino, a region in Sidama, serving 240,000 people. I recently visited and was astonished to learn that the birth mortality rate in their first year of operation was zero! As mortality rates are close to 20% in this area, the clinic is clearly saving lives.

We also used your donations to expand the Tsion School in Tigray. Ayis Antoniou, Chairman of our Board of Directors, recently toured the school and was delighted to learn that a community-led initiative enrolled 1,850 students: effectively, all of the eligible children in this area. This is a remarkable achievement as school attendance is not mandatory in that area.

Despite these successes, we have a long list of projects awaiting funding that will help children in need. Your continued support will allow us to reach more children than ever. To contribute to our humanitarian aid efforts, please visit our website, [whfc.org](http://whfc.org).

Thank you for joining us in our mission.



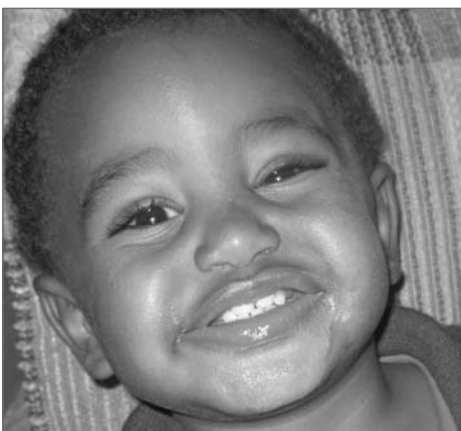
Pete visits WHFC's Horizon House in Ethiopia

Peter Leppanen  
President & CEO

## Family Story ~ Ethiopia

### THE JOY OF OUR LIVES

by Doreen & John A



Robert Michael Mucie Siyum came to our family from Ethiopia in July of 2006. He was a tiny 4-month-old who had struggled mightily with a major

blood infection while in Ethiopia. He had already been referred to us and accepted as part of the family while he struggled to stay alive. Through the marvelous care given by Dr. Tsegaye and the nurses and nannies, he not only survived, but thrived under the care given to him at Horizon House. Upon my

arrival in Ethiopia he had gained weight, was eating non-stop, and had captured the hearts of the staff and of our family.

He came home to join his mother, father, and big brother Jay T. It's been a little more than a year and Robbie continues to thrive. He's grown into an energetic, happy, funny, and mischievous toddler. He loves to wrestle with his big brother, run outside, play in the sprinkler, dance, and laugh. It's amazing to see how much he's grown from the tiny baby with the spindly limbs into a rough, tough, chubby toddler.

We can't imagine our lives without him. His big brother hates to be away from him even for a day. He's the joy of our lives.

We think about the family he left behind every day who still live in Sidama. We plan to return to Ethiopia when he's older to help him connect with his birth family and with his birth country. Thank you to WHFC for taking such good care of our son and for bringing this joy into our lives. ✨

## Family Story ~ Russia

### MEANT TO BE

by Sari D

After years of trying I was ready to adopt. John was not quite ready yet, although he was very open to the idea. Then John was ready and I wasn't. When we were both ready, we went to an information session from a large, well-known and well-respected agency. They told us that since I had a medical issue in my past we would never be able to adopt. We were devastated and resumed trying. That set us back one year. Then we were both ready to try adoption again. We researched many agencies and then a friend of mine met a woman at a Mommy And Me class who had just brought her child home from Russia through Wide Horizons. We called the next day and the journey began.



John and I had names in mind for our future children as we began the (endless) paperwork. The names all had "an" in them somewhere for my grandmother, Anne. When we were days away from submitting our dossier we mentioned that we wanted to consider a young sibling group. When we heard of a brother and sister, Diana, age 3, and Aleksandr, just under age 2, it had to be meant to be. The names both had "an" in them!

We were told that Aleksander had some medical issues, but decided that we wanted to take the chance. And when he walked into the room the first time we knew that it really was meant to be. Aleksander toddled in as happy as could be. Diana walked in shyly but was hiding a smile behind her hair. We had been warned that a lot of times children do not come right over to their new parents, but they came right over to us and started to play. We were instantly a family.

Since they have been home we really have become an instant family. It has not always been easy - there have been temper tantrums and tears, and a lot of love and joy as well. Aleksander has already started speaking a great deal and is being evaluated for surgery in a couple of weeks and Diana has grown over 3<sup>1/2</sup> inches and was speaking English fluently within two or three months. And there has already been a huge surprise.

Three days after we all got home from Russia we discovered that I am pregnant after many years of trying. We think that this little guy was just waiting to have his big brother and sister home before he wanted to make an appearance. Diana and Aleksander know that there is a baby in Mommy's belly and that the family is going to get a little bit bigger. Aleksander tries to feed the baby by pouring juice and leaving goldfish on my belly. Diana likes to feel the baby kick and doesn't understand why he is sleeping when she wants to play. And we really do believe that while this baby is growing in Mommy's tummy, Diana and Aleksander grew in Mommy and Daddy's heart. ❀



## Family Story ~ Philippines

### A NEW PLAN

By Maureen L



Do you want to adopt a happy, outgoing, wildly intelligent child who loves to laugh and is well-behaved? Too late - he's mine!

Joshua came home from the Philippines in late February 2007 at age 5<sup>1/2</sup>, but he's learned the language so well already that when I told him having ice cream only once a day is all part of the plan, he answered, "We need a new plan." The other day he asked from the back of the car, "Mom, talk to me." I said, "Shall I quote Shakespeare?" "Ummm - no." He's excited about starting school and making friends. If he ever makes too much noise, all I have to do is shake my head and he quiets down. He loves to sing and play the guitar. He knows every line of dialogue to *Toy Story*. Everyone who meets him comments on what a smart, friendly, special child he is.

I can't picture my life without Joshua, and I ask myself every day "What did I ever do to deserve the world's best kid?" All the waiting, the paperwork, the forms and fees all seem like nothing now that I have him in my life.

The most interesting part of the story? That my happy, smart, friendly, well-behaved perfect son was initially presented to me as a Waiting Child "whose issues scare off most people." All children are a gift. Consider a waiting child! ❀

# WHFC'S WAITING CHILDREN

We are actively seeking parents for more than 90 children from around the world who are waiting for an adoptive family - waiting for a variety of reasons including medical needs, age, or sibling group status.

*Pictured here are just a few of these children:*



King  
DOB: 12/10/95  
ASIA



Liz  
DOB: 2/2/98  
LATIN AMERICA



*Sibling Group:*  
Edmun, Mariemea & Mary Beth  
DOB: 10/23/97, 10/9/00 & 8/19/94  
ASIA

## LEARN MORE ABOUT WAITING CHILDREN

*For more information about these children and others waiting:*

- Register online for our PhotoListing at [whfc.org/waiting](http://whfc.org/waiting)
- View our Horizon Kids webinar online
- View Horizon Kids profiles in all WHFC regional office reception areas
- Talk to other families who have adopted a waiting child
- Contact a member of our Horizon Kids Team:

Amanda Halpern  
[ahalpern@whfc.org](mailto:ahalpern@whfc.org)

Andrea Marshall  
[amarshall@whfc.org](mailto:amarshall@whfc.org)

Sarah Ferguson  
[sferguson@whfc.org](mailto:sferguson@whfc.org)



## HORIZON KIDS: PROGRAM BY PROGRAM

COUNTRY:	AGE/GENERAL HEALTH OF CHILDREN:	PROGRAM ADVANTAGES:
<i>China</i>	Infants & toddlers  Minor & correctable medical needs	Some parent requirements may be more flexible
<i>Colombia</i>	Toddlers, school-aged children & sibling groups  Generally healthy children	Children receive excellent services, including psychotherapy & medical treatment  More flexible parent requirements
<i>Eastern Europe</i>	Infants & toddlers w/ minor & significant medical needs, school-aged children	More information available than w/ a standard referral
<i>Ethiopia</i>	Toddlers, school-aged children & sibling groups  Generally healthy children	Very flexible parent requirements
<i>India</i>	Infants & toddlers w/ minor & significant medical needs  School-aged children & sibling groups	Comprehensive medical records often available  More flexible parent requirements
<i>Korea</i>	Infants & toddlers w/ minor & significant medical needs	Parent age waivers available for specific children  Monthly medical updates
<i>Philippines</i>	Toddlers & school-aged children w/ minor & significant medical needs  Healthy sibling groups	Single parents considered
<i>Taiwan</i>	Infants & toddlers with more significant medical needs; older children with minor to more significant medical needs	Detailed medical information available  Flexible parent requirements