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Giorgia Fumanti and TDH

As circumstances dictate, this edition of the TDH Newsletter is the one and only opportunity for us at TDH to tell you about Giorgia Fumanti and what she is doing for us before the April 13 event. So please read this article.

Our first experience of Giorgia "live" was at the Montreal Gala where she sang two songs. She had an extraordinary effect on her audience; I was completely unprepared for it and I have never had any other experience quite like it. Her stage presence was mesmerizing. The crowd was in tears! I was astonished.

I talked to her husband/agent, Maurice, and learned a few things about her. She was born in Italy, came to Canada as a young woman, lives with her French Canadian husband and daughter Crystal in Ste-Anne-des-Lacs, and tours the world giving concerts. When she was sixteen in Italy, she joined her local church choir and discovered – to her amazement - that she had an extraordinary voice. Some years later, her husband encouraged her to sing and took on the management of her career. For her part, she seems to have nothing of the usual artistic temperament. She views her voice as a 'gift from God' and considers that she has a duty to use it to do good in the world.

She is a high-class performer. In addition to her strong stage presence, she is articulate. She has a wide repertoire, captured on several albums which enjoy lively sales. As a person she is generous and kind and very empathetic. But all of that pales against the fact that she is also a true charismatic performer. Sometimes critics call such performers 'great' performers because they somehow strongly affect the audience. And she does that.

Giorgia on-disc is not quite the same as Giorgia in-person. When Giorgia sings in-person she somehow reaches out into the audience with her emotions or spirit or whatever and captures people's emotions in a way that is both unique and powerful. Being present at one of her concerts is an experience. I do not know exactly how she does it, but I have experienced it and I recognize what she does.

Giorgia did sing two songs at the Montreal TDH Gala, but Maurice says that was just an introduction. Her first full performance for TDH is going to be at the Rialto Theatre on Sunday, April 13 at 8:00 pm. The theater has 750 seats and we hope to fill them all. If you are near Montreal, please go to our website, buy tickets and come to hear the 'Giorgia Experience'. <http://www.theatrerialto.ca/en/programmation/music/1-358-giorgia-fumanti-benefit-concert-for-tdh-canada.html>



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Retrospective of 2013



Looking back on 2013 is not quite the same as looking back on other years. The year marked a turning point for me personally, and one I can never forget. This Christmas (2013) the "routine" things we did as a family were no longer routine. They were imbued with a character of something precious that they had never had before. As my children laughed over the events of last Christmas which had been clouded or submerged in my head – being in and out of the hospital as the doctors came to the diagnosis they didn't want to be there, family members dropping one by one to a violent stomach flu, while trying to maintain a semblance of normalcy, meals prepared and frozen before I realized that anything was wrong that served well over days we tried merely to get through, precious days with my children not knowing if it would be the last Christmas, cards and notes and letters of support, meals lovingly prepared by friends, flowers and thoughtful gifts from so many, a Facebook group that made me cry – the list goes on, without even taking into account the days of feeling ill, the peaking and plunging of blood counts, the resistance of body to spirit.

Yes, looking back it all seems horrific, even if in fact the days themselves were matter-of-factly just ordinary days to get through. But now the full impact of what it was has settled in and I can see it with more objectivity. So cancer has been a challenge, but now a year later, life is back to normal. No – better than normal. My energy has returned, far surpassing what it was "BC", and according to the last hospital visit, there is no trace of cancer. I am profoundly grateful – to God, to my husband and my children - ever my strongest and most steadfast support, and to all of you for your kindness and understanding, your patience, your support, and your love.

No less challenging has been the adoption scene. An article in Today's Parent in October noted that one of Canada's largest agencies, The Children's Bridge, used to process about 200 adoptions per year, and is now down to about 70. It also notes that two Canadian

adoption agencies have closed in recent years, and most have cut back on staff. In Quebec the total number of international adoptions was 248 in 2012 and fell to 198 in 2013, the lowest it has ever been. In Ontario the number was 222 in 2012, and 101 up until November 2013.

Waiting times have also lengthened. Russia, before the current suspension, and South Korea take one to two years, which seems to be the average, but China and Vietnam are currently a six year wait or more for healthy children. A child with medical needs may involve a waiting period to proposal as little as six months or as long as two years. And the processing time for adoption has lengthened as well, with Vietnam taking approximately 8 months from proposal to finalization.

Adoption of newborn or very young children is rare (with the exception of US adoptions), the majority of children being two years old or more at the time of arrival. In Ukraine children are 5 years or older, although sibling groups may include younger children.

All of the above factors have contributed to augmenting costs. Agencies have had to diversify to survive. No longer looking to one country as their primary program, as China or Vietnam or Russia used to be, agencies are looking to small programs in several countries. But opening countries and establishing staff both here and in the foreign country to run them is expensive, and this is reflected in the adoption costs. Agencies are forced to charge annual maintenance fees of \$1000 to \$1500 to accommodate to the fact that a contract signed in 2008 and expected at the time to be fulfilled in 2010 might now only be completed in 2014 or even later. Yet the cost of the program – salaries and rent in Canada and in the foreign country – do not stop after 2 years. Our first adoption in Honduras 40 years ago cost \$2000, travel included. That same adoption today costs \$35,000 - and little has changed in terms of the procedure.

(Continued on page 3)



(Continued from page 2)

Adoption programs are more and more vulnerable and subject to changing regulations and laws. Decreasing numbers of what are accepted by countries as their adoptable children and increasing numbers of waiting parents allows countries to be far more selective – single persons, especially men, same gender couples, older parents, parents who are obese, have medical or psychological problems, low income, or less education face discrimination in the adoptive process as sending countries impose criteria which limit whom they are prepared to accept as applicants. And sadly, sometimes these criteria are imposed well after the parents have been waiting several years for a proposal.

All that being said, we are still here and doing our best to accommodate to this ever moving target that is international adoption. A total of 19 (Ontario) children came to Canada this year. Our oldest program, Vietnam, continues to move slowly. This year (2013) we were able to complete 13 adoptions in Quebec and 14 in Ontario and the rest of Canada. We are currently placing healthy children with families who applied in mid-2008, and special needs children with families who applied in 2012 and 2013. At the present moment there are 31 children in process (Ontario and Quebec).

Ukraine in 2013 saw the adoption of 24 children in Quebec and 5 in Ontario. It continues to be an excellent option for families willing to take older children or sibling groups. Adoptions take place in less than a year, and the children have been amazingly well adjusted and have adapted well to life in Canada.

Honduras, always a small program, brought 2 children to Ontario. The children available are special needs or children more than 5 years old. We have 7 families currently on the waiting list for healthy children, numbered in the range of 18 to 170 on the list of global applicants. Their dossiers were sent between December 2011 and September 2013, and they have asked for children from 3 to 12 years old.

We have one family from Ontario whose dossier is in Russia awaiting the proposal of a child. Six adoptions have been completed from Quebec this year, and 21 families are in the early stages of the process. As has been widely reported in the media, the situation in Russia is in flux, as the Supreme Court has sent a directive to the regions suggesting that a bilateral agreement be signed between Russia and any country doing international adoptions there. This requirement has much to do with Russia's attitude toward gays and lesbians. They would like to have assurance that Russian children will not be placed (or re-placed) in the home of a same-gender couple, a policy that cannot be accepted in Canada, as it is seen as a human rights violation. Nonetheless, this memo from the Supreme Court does not have the force of law, and some

regions continue to do adoptions without problems. Additionally, one couple from Spain whose adoption was refused appealed the decision to the Supreme Court itself and won. We are expecting that this situation will be clarified one way or the other in the next months.

Our new programs – Haiti and US (Ontario) and Kazakhstan (Quebec) – have not yet completed any adoptions. Haiti has just completed its new legislation and is now ready to receive files. We have 4 families in the stage of dossier preparation. Being a new program, it is difficult to predict what can be expected, but children from 6 months may be adopted and we are expecting wait time of 7 to 18 months from time of matching.

No US adoptions have been completed yet, but one family has been chosen by a birth mother after a wait of less than 6 months, and is expected to travel soon. This program is the one international program open to same gender couples.

In Quebec, 5 families are preparing their dossiers for Kazakhstan. Children available are mostly 3 years and older, sibling groups, or children with special needs (**All** children in Kazakhstan are considered to have minor correctible physical special needs).

All this to confirm that indeed international adoption is not the answer to decreasing numbers of adoptable children in Canada it once was. The path is fraught with difficulties, always uncertain, frustratingly long, expensive. It is vitally important that before embarking on it you are determined, committed, and realistic, that you know what you are able to tolerate – in terms of process, waiting, uncertainty. Not to mention the child himself or herself. There are wonderful stories of adoption, and we try to present these to you in these quarterly issues of the newsletter. But you need to think about the child who could be yours. You want a girl, but is it worth the extra year or two you may have to wait? Every parent dreams of seeing their child's first smile, first step, hearing their first word. But thousands of children wait for the hand that will guide them through the pains of growing up, the heart that will listen as they tell of their fears and loneliness. Everyone hopes for the "perfect" child, but is the child who struggles with heart disease or HIV, a deformity or limited mobility really less than perfect? These are the lessons learned by most parents who have enlarged their vision of adoption, and opened the door a little wider for the child they would welcome. Adoption can and does happen, and for those who are willing to be patient, yet determined and open-minded, there is hope. And we will be with you.

Dorinda Cavanaugh (dorinda@tdh.ca)

Adoption Program Updates: 4th Quarter - 2013

Haiti Contact Maria at 613-482-6063 for current information on this new program.

Honduras 1 Quebec family has accepted the proposal of a healthy 12 year old girl.

Russia 6 adoptions were completed for Quebec families this quarter. Applications are not being accepted for this program at the moment.

Ukraine This quarter one Ontario couple completed the adoption of 2 boys aged 7 and 10. Three Quebec families completed adoptions this quarter. 1 single child adoption of a 10 year old boy, and 2 sibling groups with 3 children each (a 7 year old girl, 3 and 4 year old boys and a 10 year old girl, 5 and 12 year old boys).

Applications for the Ukraine program are being accepted for children over 5 years of age or sibling groups (as long as the oldest child is over 5 the other sibling(s) can be younger). Waiting time can be very short, especially for sibling groups. Younger special needs children are also available.

United States (New York) 1 adoption is in process for a TDH Ontario family. Applications are being accepted for newborn children of black or biracial decent. Average wait is 6-24 months (although this can not be guaranteed as adoptive parents are selected by birth parents).

Vietnam This quarter 4 TDH Ontario families have completed adoptions. 10 adoptions are in process plus 2 relative adoptions. 5 families completed adoptions in Quebec. 14 adoptions are in process for Quebec. There has been 1 proposal for a List 1 child this quarter. Special needs include children with Hep B, Hep C, HIV+, sibling groups, older children, children with cleft palate, strabismus, orthopedic problems, umbilical hernias, prematurity and other conditions.

For general information on any program please contact:

Maria Chouchtari (maria@tdh.ca OR(613)482-6063)

Vietnam progress report update

Families who adopt from Vietnam are legally obligated to provide the Vietnamese authorities with follow-up reports at specific intervals. They are due in Vietnam in March (due in the TDH office by Feb 1) and Sept (due in the TDH office by Aug 1). Below are links to Word documents that you are welcome to edit, particularly to add information that truly captures the development of your own child, as long as the basic information required is retained. These reports cannot be submitted electronically. Four hard copies of the report and of accompanying photos are required. Please contact TDH for specifics on sending in these reports.

Report Form:

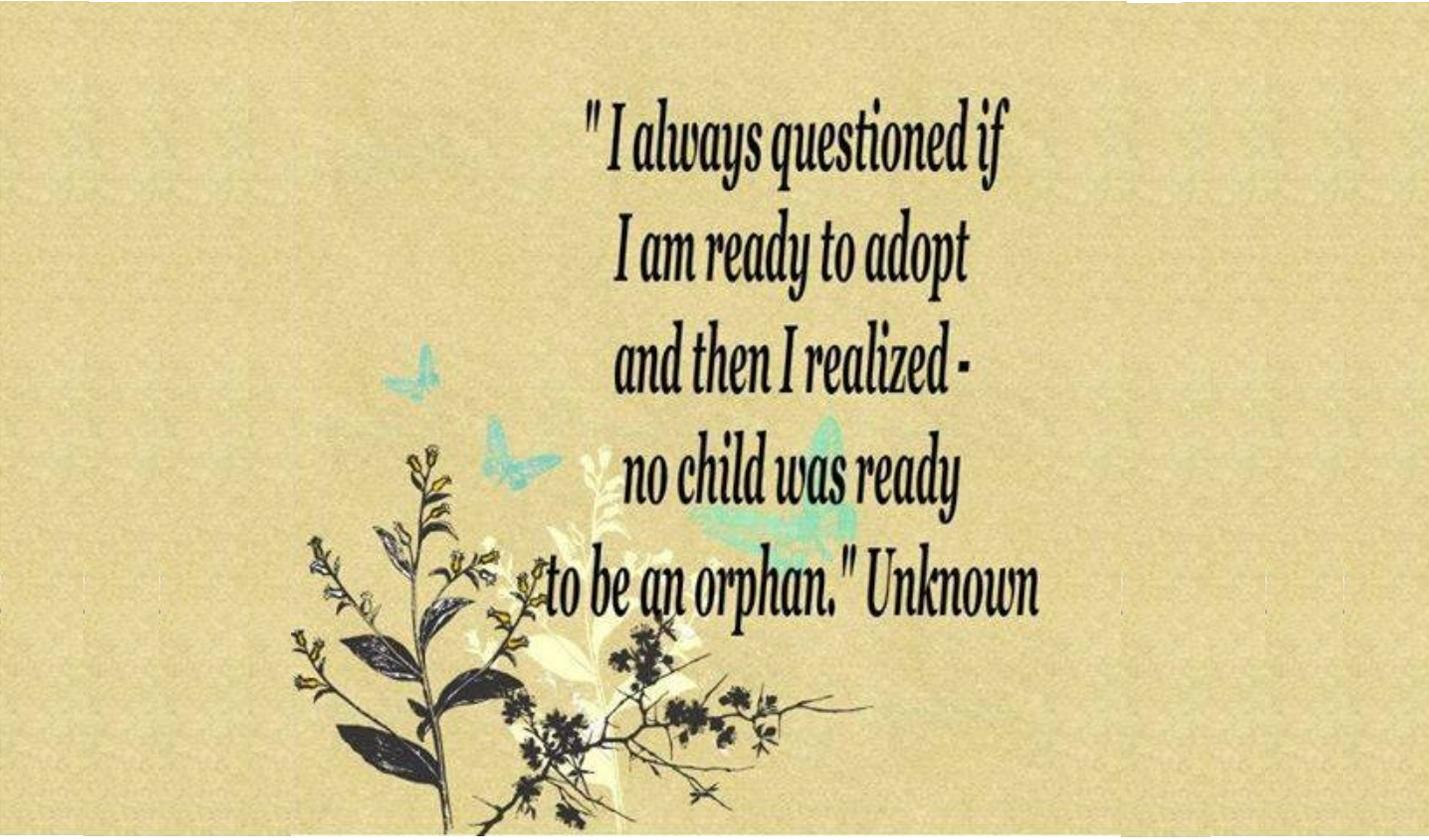
<http://tdhontario.tdh.ca/downloads/VN%20%20Progress%20Report%20Form%20Eng-VN%202013.doc>

Photo Frame:

<http://tdhontario.tdh.ca/downloads/Photos%20Frame%20Report.docx>

Report Guidelines:

<http://tdhontario.tdh.ca/downloads/Guidelines-Follow%20Up%20Reports.docx>



"I always questioned if
I am ready to adopt
and then I realized -
no child was ready
to be an orphan." Unknown

Families Needed Updates:

- We have found a family for the little boy of 4 years old with lower limb palsy. He will be coming home in February.
- The one-year old girl with hip dysplasia has been placed with another agency.
- The little boy of 9 is also in process of adoption with a TDH family.
- **We are still looking for a family for the young girl of 14, in good health.**
- For the little boy with facial deformities, we have found a family ready to adopt him. He has had the surgery for his cleft palate, and is doing well.
- 3 children with HIV are in the process of adoption.
- The little boy with the missing ear is also in process of adoption with a TDH family.

Families Needed:

- A boy of 3.5 years with mild language delay, probably due to lack of stimulation. He is on medication for hyperactivity, diagnosed at 2 years, but our pediatrician thinks this may be not the case at all. More investigation will be done to clarify.
- A little boy of 3.5 years, very curious and active. He was treated for seizures a year ago, but has not had any since that time.
- A little boy of 4.5 years with "microphthalmia" (slightly smaller eyes than usual) and a cataract in the right eye. He is small for his age, and is developing normally except in the area of language.
- A little girl of 3.5 years, born prematurely whose physical growth is normal but who exhibits significant delay in the social, cognitive and lingual areas. She does not engage in social interaction with her peers, but does with adults. She understands simple, but not more complex commands. She can mimic gestures, but not spontaneously use them in appropriate contexts
- 5 siblings from Ukraine: girl born 2004, triplets-2 girls, 1 boy born 2006, boy born 2010
- 4 siblings from Ukraine: 2 girls (16 and 7 years old), 2 boys (5 and 8 years old)
- 3 siblings from Ukraine: 2 girls born 2000, 2005, 1 boy born 2003
- 3 siblings from Ukraine: girl born 2001, 2 boys born 2003, 2006
- 3 siblings from Ukraine: girl born 2000, 2 boys born 2005, 2009
- 3 siblings from Ukraine: boy born 2005, 2 girls born 2006, 2008

For more information please contact :
Manon Parent (manon@tdh.ca)
Maria Chouchtari (maria@tdh.ca)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

About Our Programs:

Q. What program do you currently recommend?

A. Currently there is no limited quota assigned to the Ukraine program so dossiers of interested couples meeting the criteria are sent to Ukraine as soon as they are ready, and a date for the visit to Ukraine is set shortly thereafter. It is the fastest of all adoptions, the process can be finished in (6) months. Many families adopt siblings. One child must be 5 or older, but the other siblings may be younger or older. These are healthy and beautiful children, who adapt very well and love to learn new things. Some may already know a few words in English but primarily they speak Russian. There is no age limitation of the adoptive parents, but there must be at least a 15 years difference between the adult and the child. Older couples may adopt as well. Couples must be married and both must take the trip which averages about 8 weeks. There are no harsh rules and expectations. Couples must be basically healthy and able to provide a good home for the child(ren). Interpol documents include fingerprints and attest that there is no criminal record.

Q. Do both adoptive parents have to travel to complete the adoption?

A. Yes, with the exception of the Vietnam Program, both parents are currently required to travel to complete the adoption.

Q. How healthy are the children? What kind of Special needs are we talking about?

A. Special needs include children with Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV, sibling groups, older children, children with cleft palate, strabismus, orthopedic problems, umbilical hernias, prematurity and other conditions. During the process TDH Ontario/ TDH pour les enfants will provide you with a questionnaire with a list of potential conditions. You can check which Special Needs you would "consider", "accept" or "decline". To prepare it is helpful to research some of the conditions to see what would be a good fit for you and your family and learn what resources exist in your community. Answers on the form are not etched in stone. They are there to provide a basic guideline to help TDH Ontario

match the right child with your family.

Q. Is there an age limit for parents to adopt?

Each program has different expectations in regards to age. Please see our program overview at: <http://tdhontario.tdh.ca/programs.html>

About The Home Study:

Q. Must I prove I am infertile?

A. There is no need to prove that you are infertile to adopt. Many fertile people adopt. People come to adoption for many different reasons. If you have decided to create your family through adoption because of infertility, this is likely something you will discuss and consider with your adoption practitioner during the Home Study. I highly recommend the book "Adopting After Infertility" by Patricia Irwin Johnston as a starting point.

Q. Do I have to own my own house? Do I have to move into a bigger house before I can adopt?

A. As a part of your home study, your adoption practitioner will be reviewing your living and financial situations. There is no rule that says that you need to own a home but you will have to show that you can provide a suitable home in which to raise a child. One recommendation on the home study form is that the child has his or her own room.

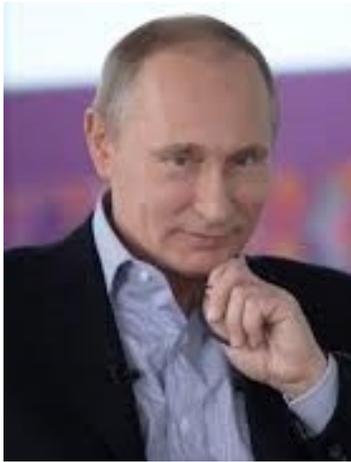
Q. I have other children does that reduce my eligibility to adopt?

A. Many families who have adopted through TDH in Canada have other children (both biological and adopted). Having children does not reduce eligibility. There are Ministry rules in place regarding the placement of children younger than existing children in a household as well as placing children 18 months apart.

Watch for more questions and answers in upcoming issues and on our website. Submit your questions to sharon@tdh.ca. For more specific information contact: [Maria Chouchtari \(maria@tdh.ca\)**](mailto:Maria Chouchtari (maria@tdh.ca))**

Researched and compiled by Lee-Anne Maier

Adoptions from Russia: Vladimir Putin's influence



I think that the military use the phrase "collateral damage" to indicate those civilians on the sidelines who are unintentionally killed or wounded by military activity. I suppose there are degrees of collateral damage. I do not know the phrase that identifies those who are hurt by political actions. But the innocent are certainly hurt by political actions.

Vladimir Putin is the fourth and current President of Russia. By all the public reports, he wields a very strong hand in what happens in Russia. In general Russia has positioned itself as a country that is willing to have its orphaned and abandoned children adopted by Canadian couples. And TDH spent several years satisfying all the regulations required by Ontario and Quebec and Russia to be allowed to manage such adoptions. So we all assumed that Mr. Putin generally approved of international adoption.

As it happened, more recently, the issue of gay marriages became a major news item and a matter of public discussion and debate. It is currently being reported that one by one American states have been passing (or not passing) laws allowing gay-marriages. None of us supposed that gay-marriages would affect international adoption. We were wrong.

Then Mr. Putin expressed his opposition to the gay lifestyle and gay marriages in particular by saying something that took everyone by surprise. He expressed the opinion that countries that accepted gay-marriages should not be allowed to adopt Russian children. Upon inquiry we learned that the rationale was that –if it should happen that the adoption of a Russian child should break down and the child was put into the hands of the public social service system, it might be possible for the public social service system to place the child with a gay couple who wanted to adopt. Mr. Putin did not want to see such an event take place.

Given the complexity of international adoption, it is, perhaps, quite a stretch to think that such an event even would take place, but it is certainly something that could possibly happen. And, given our current level of human rights legislation, it is not something that Canada could even disallow.

Although Mr. Putin's remarks do not currently have the force of law in Russia, he is the President and has great prestige. His opinion obviously counts. So in some Russian regions, some individual judges decided to refuse to allow international adoptions to take place. It is a minority action and not in accord with current Russian law, but it is what happened. Moreover in a recent case of a Spanish married man and woman who appealed the decision of a regional judge had their adoption upheld by the Russian Supreme Court and the child is now in Spain.

Understandably in the public domain of sports, the concern immediately arose about whether or not gay athletes or even openly gay people would be allowed to participate in the Sochi Olympics. Very recently a news item appeared in the Toronto Star saying that they could indeed participate and would be welcome.

Our Russian coordinator has done her best to sort out what the situation actually is in Russia regarding international adoption and countries that accept gay-marriages. While political actions are seldom straight forward and the current attitude toward politicians in general is profoundly cynical, it does appear that in Russia Mr. Putin's views have been noted but there has been no official move yet to enshrine them in law.

Brendan Cavanaugh (brendan@tdh.ca)

The Unofficial Visit: delegation from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam



We recently received 4 officials from Ho Chi Minh City in an “unofficial” visit to the families who had adopted children from this region.

In the face of the negative press surrounding intercountry adoption, for the last twenty years or so we have been expected to provide the Vietnamese officials with the opportunity to see for themselves that the Vietnamese children adopted into Canadian families are well treated. As is the case for other adoption agencies as well, it is expected that part of that effort is for us, from time to time, to invite officials from various levels of the Vietnamese government to visit us in Canada.

During these visits we try to accomplish two things: First, we take them to visit specific children in their homes and for their sake we organize group meetings of adoptive parents and their children. Second, we show the official visitors some Canadian highlights (e.g., *Niagara Falls, Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Quebec*, and all the countryside in between). We try to expose them to various aspects of Canadian culture as well (e.g., cuisine, customs, and history). We think it has been an effective way to both assure them of the children’s well-being and to introduce them to how life is lived in Canada.

Contrary to the assertions of those who do not really understand the Vietnamese international adoption system, all the various national agencies are expected to host these visits, and they do not have any effect on the availability of children for adoption via any one of the agencies. The various officials have usually already visited several countries.

The most recent group, consisting of four officials plus our Vietnamese representative in Hanoi, Thuy, arrived at *Pearson Airport* in *Toronto* via *Air Canada* on Thursday evening, November 7, 2013; they left from *Montreal’s (Dorval) Trudeau Airport* on Friday, November 15, 2013 – a relatively short 8-day visit. A special thank you to Thuy who assured the translation and interpretation throughout their visit. Not much would have been said without her!

On Friday, the day after their arrival, we drove them first to *Niagara-On-The*

-Lake for an elegant breakfast at the classical *Prince of Wales Inn*, and then to see the iconic *Niagara Falls*; The days are short in November. This trip was organized for earlier in the year but circumstances forced this later time. But the trees were still wearing their fall colors in the *Niagara peninsula*. We drove back to the heritage site, the *Victoria Hotel*, on *Yonge Street* in *Toronto*. They were quite tired, jet lag and all.

Saturday was the *Toronto Day*. They walked from the hotel to the *Farmer’s Market* and discovered *Winners* on the walk back to the hotel. In the afternoon TDH had organized a group gathering of more than a dozen families and their children at a commercial playroom, *Jellybeenz* in *Brampton* for the sake of meeting them. Another group of families joined them for dinner in the exotic ambiance of the *Rain Forest Café* in the huge *Yorkdale Mall*. It was a very busy day.



Remembrance Day ceremony at McGill University: Delegation with students of CMR Fort St-Jean who were present in their uniforms.

Sunday was the drive to *Montreal*. But before we left they visited the 2nd item on the current list of “the 7 Wonders of the World”, the *CN Tower*. We stopped for a lunch which was hosted by the Wagner Family in *Kingston*. Michael Wagner and his wife Johanne have nine kids, four of whom are adopted. The last two little twin sisters are ‘special needs’ children with the life-threatening *Alagille Syndrome*; hopefully they will both soon be old enough to be put on the liver transplant waiting list. They were not supposed to be able to walk, or eat, or talk or even live. But now at 2+ years, they walk, eat, and talk, and with a transplant will live.

Monday we brought them to the *Remembrance Day* ceremony at *McGill University*, a very moving and impressive ceremony. They even managed to have pictures taken with some of the students of CMR Fort St-Jean who were present in their uniforms. After lunch on *Montreal’s McKay Street* at *Sho Dan*, a sushi restaurant owned by Romeo Pham, one of the hundreds of youth TDH brought to Canada from the Vietnam War camps in Thailand, they had some personal shopping time in *Angrignon Mall*.

Tuesday was *Ottawa Day*. The day before they grocery shopped on lower St-Laurent Blvd., between the two huge monumental Chinese archways that bracket *Montreal’s Chinatown*. So this day they made their own breakfast at their hotel in Dorval, the *Premier Executive Suites*. We picked them up and drove to Vankleek Hill, our Ontario office, where they were greeted and hosted by Manon Parent and Agathe Belanger with a “ten-o’clock’ snack and tea”. We continued our trip to *Ottawa* and arrived a little early so we toured by *Rideau Hall*, *Sussex Drive* and *Parliament*. Our afternoon meeting with the



Several unique gatherings allowed the delegates to see around 25 Canadian families, representing about 60 children. Above, the remarkable event hosted by Israel and Agnes Godfrey in their home.

Vietnamese *Ambassador To Anh Dzung*, was especially warm, friendly and pleasant. The very gracious *Ambassador Dzung* encouraged the Vietnamese officials to talk about their work with children in Vietnam and we were encouraged to talk about TDH. After the Embassy visit, we went to the *Saigon Restaurant* in the *Byward Market*, and then slowly drove back to *Montreal* in heavy traffic. As a bit of a *Montreal* cuisine experience, we stopped at *Pete’s Smoked Meat* on *Ile Perrot* for sandwiches before dropping the delegates off at their hotel for the night.

Wednesday was again devoted to children. We could tell they were getting exhausted so we arranged a late morning pick up. First was shopping at *Dollarama* again, as the directors were looking for gifts to bring back for the children of their orphanages. At 1 pm Genevieve Bernard and her husband Marc-Alexandre Allen-Lefebvre and their two children hosted a lunch at an innovative and upscale *Bidon taverne culinaire* restaurant in Brossard. Afterwards they visited Bao, not three yet, in the *Montreal Children’s Hospital* where he was recovering from the

latest in a long series of operations. And then we had another gathering of families and children at the semiprivate *Mosaic Café* located in the *TDH building on Lionel Groulx in Montreal*. After that they headed back to the hotel to rest.

On Thursday we picked them up for a little more shopping, this time at the newly opened *Target* in *Pointe Claire* and then we drove to *Bécancour*, part of the *Trois-Rivières* metropolitan area, where Israel and Agnes Godfrey hosted a remarkable event in their home just for her extended family – 23 children and 12 adults. Four families who have 14 children adopted through TDH! It was quite an experience! The Vietnamese were overwhelmed.

On Friday we picked them up at 4:30 am to take them to *Pierre Trudeau Airport* for their trip home.

The highlights of the trip were the meeting with *Ambassador Dzung* and the gatherings to meet TDH families. We estimate that the delegation was able to see some 25 families, representing about 60 children, and travelled about 1600 kilometers by car during the eight days they were here.

Brendan Cavanaugh (brendan@tdh.ca)

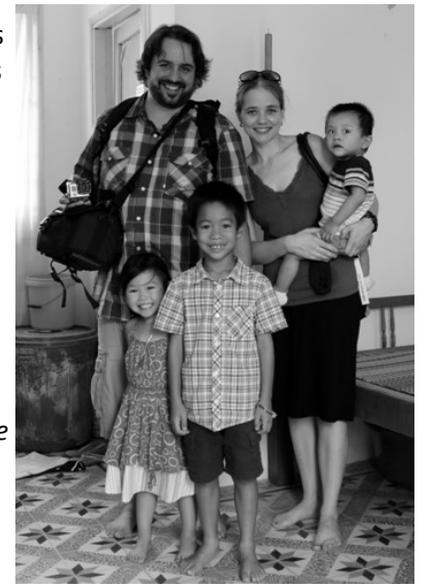
Bienvenue...NEW Arrivals! Les enfants récemment arrivés

Ils nous a fait un immense plaisir d'accueillir Max Ngoc Long dans notre famille. Nous l'avons rencontré pour la première fois le 2 août et l'avons adopté le 9. Nous sommes rentrés au Québec le 23 août 2013. Notre petit Maxou a maintenant 19 mois et il fait le bonheur de ses parents, de sa grande soeur et de son grand frère. Un immense MERCI à TDH de nous avoir permis une fois de plus, d'agrandir notre famille!!

It fills us with great pleasure to welcome Max Ngoc Long to our family. We met him for the first time on August 2nd and adopted him on the 9th. We returned to Quebec together on August 23, 2013. Our little "Maxou" is now 19 months old and he brings great joy to his parents and his big brother and sister. A big THANK YOU to TDH for helping us to grow our family once again.

Geneviève and Alexandre

Photo: Geneviève, Alexandre, Samuel Hau (8 ans/years old, Tra Vinh), Mya Xuan (5 ans/years old, Ho Chi Minh) et Max Ngoc Long (19 mois/months, Ho Chi Minh)



Ross Virgin of Toronto is proud to introduce his son, Tuan, born January 2003 in Vietnam. Tuan arrived home in Canada in October, 2013.



Lillian and Dave Winkler, along with big brother Daniel, are happy to have Ethan home from Vietnam. Ethan was born in May, 2012 and arrived home in October, 2013.

lillian8@sympatico.ca



Patrice, Cynthia et Benjamin du St-Josheph-du-lac disent bienvenue à leur fille Mila-Rose, née le 5 juin 2012. Mila-Rose est arrivée à la maison le 12 janvier 2014.

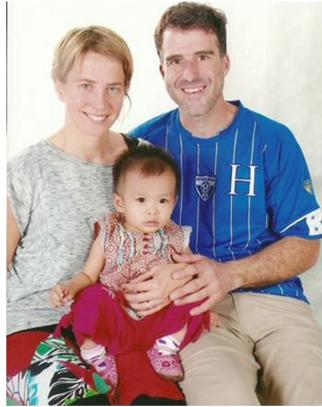
Patrice, Cynthia and Benjamin of St-Josheph-du-lac are happy to welcome home their daughter Mila-Rose, born on June 5, 2012. Mila-Rose came home on January 12, 2014.



Marianne O'Reilly of Vancouver joyfully received her daughter, Mia, in December, 2013. Mia just turned 5.

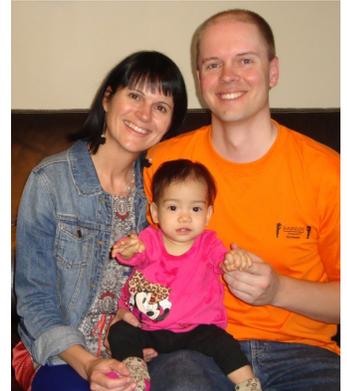


Caroline and François gratefully celebrate the arrival of Lia, from Vietnam.



We are proud to present our daughter, Romy Marchildon, born March 23th 2012 in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. We officially became her parents July 9th 2013. Romy was in Go Vap orphanage and now lives in Val-d'Or, Québec. She is a very happy and easy going child who lightens up our lives with her smile!

*Renée Labonne and
Patrick Marchildon*



Sze-Linn and Quentin of Toronto, along with big sister Pendelin, welcome Minh Khoa, born July 18, 2012 and received December 24, 2013.

szelinn@gmail.com



Adoption en Ukraine été 2013 : Notre Témoignage

Nous avons adopté une fratrie de 3 adorables enfants au cours de l'été 2013. Il s'agit de Katia (10 ans), Olga (7ans) et Sacha(5ans). Ce sont de merveilleux enfants attachants et en bonne santé. Nous avons déjà adopté un enfant en Ukraine c'est pourquoi nous avons décidé d'y retourner une seconde fois. Tout le processus s'est très bien déroulé. Merci à TDH et à toute son équipe pour nous avoir permis de réaliser notre rêve d'avoir une belle grande famille.

Ukraine Adoption– Summer 2013: Our Story

We adopted a sibling group of 3 adorable children during the summer of 2013. Our children are Katia (10 years old), Olga (7 years old) and Sacha (5 years old). They are wonderful children. They are very sweet and in good health. We have adopted previously from Ukraine and that's why we decided to return for a second time. The process went very well. We would like to thank TDH Canada and their team for helping us to make our dream of having a big, beautiful family come true.

Julie and Louis



Our family/notre famille: In the back/en arrière: Simon Oleg (Belarus 2003), Louis, in the middle/au milieu: Frédéric (Ukraine 2007), Julie, Katia (Ukraine 2013) and in the front/en avant: Ogla (Ukraine 2013) and Sacha (Ukraine 2013).

To announce your New Arrival

Email: Sharon Kashino at: sharon@tdh.ca. Translations provided by Lee-Anne Maier (lee-annemaier@tdh.ca). Your adoption must be finalized prior to the newsletter publication date (mid April).

Family Feature: Ukraine Experience

We are Yannik and Valérie, 38 and 29 years old. We have been together for seven years. A year ago we made the most important decision of our lives: to adopt children and form a family! We returned from Ukraine a month ago with 3 beautiful siblings, 3, 5 and 7 years old.

It is important for us to be able to share our point of view on adoption in Ukraine because unfortunately certain people have prejudices and negative thoughts about this country of adoption that do not reflect the reality that we experienced.

Winter of 2012

After several calls to different adoption agencies in Québec, our choice stopped at **TDH pour les enfants!** This choice was motivated by the waiting time being much shorter and the possibility of adopting 2 or 3 siblings all at the same time. Like many adoptive parents, we thought it was better to ask for the youngest children possible because of among other things, what psychologists call an attachment disorder in older children. So on our first forms, we wrote that we wanted to adopt two children aged 5 or less based on the fear that they too may be "psychologically affected" by their long years in the orphanage. We also heard that the children in this country were all sick or were suffering from mental disorders due to foetal-alcohol syndrome. In addition, two psychologists in our region refused categorically to do our psychosocial assessment since we chose the Ukraine! As a result, our home study had to be done in several visits outside the jurisdiction of our nearest Youth Centre.

Despite this very discouraging start, we remain satisfied with our choice. We became very knowledgeable about the realities and challenges of adopting older children. Following the advice of Nadia, Ukraine program coordinator for TDH, we spoke with families who had adopted in Ukraine and also with people around us who had they themselves been adopted as a baby, a child or as an adolescent.

In speaking with Nadia she was able to give us the statistics regarding the age groups of the children of previous years' adoptions as well as contacts of parents who had previously adopted in the Ukraine. It was clear then that by specifying a wider age range, we would have access to more possibilities to choose from, which was to our advantage. No one pressured us into choosing any specific age but that option really made it clear to us that it was definitely an advantage to have that wider age range to choose from. To limit ourselves to children who were under 5 could have meant that we would not have found a suitable sibling group at all.

During one of our meetings with our psychologist, we said that we wanted to increase the age limit to 9 years old. We had to work very hard to convince her that we were ready and that we knew what that would entail. The Youth Center was firm in its

recommendations and in their belief that older children were psychologically affected and that they might have attachment disorders. Finally, after long discussions, our home study recommendation enabled us to adopt 2 or 3 children from 0-9 years old.

Supply and Demand

In the Ukraine, **adoptable** children are made available first for one year to couples living in the Ukraine before they are made available for adoption to couples from other countries. Ukrainians have first choice and may adopt a child or siblings of **all** ages.

- For international adoption, the first child must be **at least 5 years** or older but in the case of siblings, the other siblings may be any age. It goes without saying that the greatest demand is for children aged 5 years old or more because it is not the majority of parents who wish to adopt more than one child at a time.
- Thereafter, the next greatest demand is for siblings consisting of two children including a child of 5+ years and older and the other sibling as young as possible.
- And finally, there are very few requests for three (3) children and even fewer if they are older. And that is exactly what motivated us even more! As there was less of a demand for this type of adoption, there was an even greater chance of our hopes being fulfilled when consulting the database at the department of adoption. And we were not wrong! Not only were there few children without siblings who were young and healthy, but also very few siblings available for a child under 9 years old.

The Reality of Ukraine

In September 2013, the big day finally arrived. We were finally in Ukraine! Throughout this waiting period, we heard all sorts of things about this country. For example, that it was very corrupt, everyone would try to take advantage of us and squeeze money out of us, that orphanages were dilapidated, that the children were sick and even "radioactive " (Alas, yes, we even heard that remark!)

But here is the REAL picture of what we saw and experienced.

- First of all, we were very well supported by our coordinator and our translator throughout our entire trip. We were never left to ourselves. These people worked **for us** and we had no trouble whatsoever trusting them. They knew what they had to do and they worked VERY hard to assist parents in finding the perfect child for them.
- Of course, there have been times at the department of adoption when consulting the databases did not prove successful. That is why we were entitled to three visits. We

went to the second appointment before finding THE right siblings! But to be perfectly clear, never was there any pressure to take on a sick or disabled child. We only were presented child dossiers quickly and without any pressure.

- If parents decide to visit a sibling that initially appeals to them and after this visit, they do not want to adopt that child for any reason whatsoever, they have the right to say "no" and return to another appointment at the adoption center. (This was OUR choice and we had to be honest with ourselves).
- Children are divided by age groups in separate orphanages (same principle as in schools). Our two boys were together in one orphanage and our daughter was in another orphanage. So we saw the reality of two different orphanages. In Ukraine, orphanages have very little help from the government and operate almost exclusively on private subsidies and donations.

The boys' section of children aged 0-7 years was fully equipped and was very much like the pre-schools/Kindergartens here in Québec. While that of our daughter's, children from ages (8-17) was not as well maintained, was dark and cold. Despite the differences, what we noticed immediately was the effort deployed so that all the children are happy, properly fed, clothed, educated, stimulated and fulfilled. The Staff are actually very attached to these children and want them to be well despite the difference in their financial means. This really touched us to see how attached the children are to all those who take care of them (teachers, nannies, the Director, the supervisors). In addition to regular school, they are taught dance, music, and sports, etc.

- Then in terms of age, we quickly realized that we had done well to increase the adopted children's age limit. The siblings that we chose are composed of two boys (3 and 5 years) and our girl, 7 years old. During many weeks we visited our children every day, we also saw the other children in their groups. These children are bright, sociable, curious, generous, gracious, and resourceful. Our apprehensions about age were gone. We fully understood what the Assistant Director of our agency had told us. (There were many families with beautiful and healthy children who were older!) Age scared us initially because we did

not know what to expect and we heard all kinds of things about it.

The reality in Ukraine is that there really are several beautiful and good families in good health with older children waiting to be adopted.

- What is also interesting to mention is that for older children it is easy for them to understand the situation. Knowing they are going to live with a new warm and welcoming family makes them proud. They are aware that this is a great opportunity for them and it is in their best interest! Our daughter clearly told us that she was happy to leave with her brothers and that we would form a big family! She already learned a few words in French. She is very smart and totally sharp!

- Finally, in Ukraine, unfortunately many children are not adopted and have a very uncertain future. At 18, they are no longer supported by the orphanages and schools and are left to themselves. Many of them end up on the streets.

Through this testimony, we do not want you to see adoption as simple and always rosy, because there are also difficult moments at times filled with emotion. We do not know either at this stage what will happen in our family life in the medium and long term, but what we do know is that we are very comfortable with our choice! We recommend to anyone who wishes to adopt, to consider siblings in Ukraine as a **very good option**, but also to consider adopting older children and to **not be afraid!**

Through **TDH pour les enfants**, we now have three beautiful, healthy, older children—more than we had imagined at the outset—who are already very attached to us and who only wanted a family.

We saw many other great children, **of all ages**, who are waiting for you!

Good luck!

Yannik and Valérie
and Anna(7), Vania(5) and Valik(3)
Translated by MariaChouchtari



Family Feature: **Expérience Ukraine**

Nous sommes Yannik et Valérie, 38 et 29 ans. Nous sommes ensemble depuis sept ans et il y a un an, nous avons pris la plus importante décision de notre vie : Adopter des enfants pour fonder notre famille ! Nous sommes revenus d'Ukraine il y a un mois avec une magnifique fratrie de 3 enfants de 3, 5, et 7 ans.

Il est important pour nous de partager notre point de vu sur l'adoption en Ukraine, car malheureusement, plusieurs personnes ont des préjugés négatifs à propos de ce pays d'adoption qui ne reflète pas la réalité que nous avons vécue.

Retour à l'hiver 2012

Après plusieurs appels dans différentes agences d'adoption au Québec, notre choix s'arrête sur TDH pour les enfants ! Ce choix était motivé par le délai d'attente beaucoup moins long et la possibilité d'adopter une fratrie (de 2 ou 3 frères et sœurs) d'un seul coup. Comme bien des parents adoptants, nous avons cru qu'il était préférable de demander à avoir les enfants les plus jeunes possible à cause, entre autre, de ce que les psychologues appellent les troubles de *l'attachement*. Alors sur nos premiers formulaires, nous avons écrit que nous désirions adopter deux enfants de 5 ans ou moins par peur qu'ils ne soient trop « affectés psychologiquement » par les longues années passées en l'orphelinat. Nous avons aussi entendu dire que les enfants dans ce pays étaient tous malades ou souffraient de troubles mentaux dus au *syndrome alcool-fœtal*. De plus, deux psychologues de notre région ont refusés catégoriquement de prendre en charge notre évaluation psychosociale puisque nous avons choisi l'Ukraine ! Nous avons donc dû faire cette évaluation composée de plusieurs visites à l'extérieur de la juridiction de notre centre jeunesse.

Malgré ces débuts peu encourageants, nous demeurions à l'aise avec notre choix. Nous nous sommes vraiment bien informés sur la réalité et les enjeux de l'adoption d'enfants plus âgés. Nous avons parlé avec des familles qui ont adoptés en Ukraine mais aussi avec des gens de notre entourage qui ont eux-mêmes été adoptés étant bébés, enfants ou adolescents.

En discutant avec Nadia de l'agence TDH au sujet des statistiques des enfants adoptés dans les années précédentes, ainsi qu'à des parents ayant déjà adoptés en Ukraine, il fut facile de constater qu'en augmentant la limite d'âge maximum nous aurions beaucoup plus de choix et de possibilités qui s'offriraient à nous. En effet, il y a beaucoup de belles familles de deux ou trois enfants plus âgées et en santé en Ukraine.

Lors d'une de nos rencontres avec notre psychologue, nous lui disons que nous souhaitons augmenter l'âge limite à 9 ans. Nous avons dû travailler très fort pour la convaincre que nous étions prêts et que nous savions ce que cela comportait. Le centre jeunesse avait été ferme dans ses recommandations envers elle et nous croyons qu'elle était également d'avis que les enfants plus vieux étaient affectés psychologiquement et

qu'ils risquaient d'avoir des troubles de *l'attachement*. Finalement, après de longues discussions, le rapport de notre évaluation psychosociale nous permet d'adopter 2 ou 3 enfants de 0 à 9 ans.

L'offre et la demande

En Ukraine, les enfants placés en adoption seront disponibles pour les parents Ukrainiens un an avant d'être disponibles pour les parents des autres pays. Or, les Ukrainiens ont le premier choix et peuvent adopter un enfant unique ou une fratrie de tous âges.

- Pour l'adoption internationale, l'enfant doit avoir **5 ans et plus** ou dans le cas d'une fratrie, un des enfants doit également avoir 5 ans et plus. Donc il va sans dire que la plus grande demande va vers les enfants uniques de 5 ans ou plus car ce n'est pas la majorité des parents qui désirent adopter plus d'un enfant d'un coup.

- Par la suite, les fratries les plus en demande sont celles de deux enfants dont un de 5 ans et plus et l'autre le plus jeune possible.

- Et finalement, il y a beaucoup moins de demande pour trois enfants et encore moins s'ils sont plus âgés. Et c'est exactement ce qui nous motivait encore davantage : Moins il y a de demande pour un type d'adoption, plus vous avez de chance d'avoir de choix au moment de consulter les registres d'adoption. Et nous n'avions pas tort ! Il y avait peu d'enfants uniques, jeunes et en santé et très peu de fratrie avec un enfant de moins de 9 ans.

La réalité en Ukraine

Septembre 2013, le grand jour était enfin arrivé, nous étions finalement en Ukraine ! Pendant toute cette période d'attente, nous avons entendu toute sorte de choses sur ce pays. Par exemple que tout était très corrompu, que tout le monde essaierait de profiter de nous et de nous soutirer de l'argent, que les orphelinats étaient délabrés, que les enfants étaient malades et même « radioactifs » (hélas oui, nous avons eue cette remarque !)

Mais voici le portrait RÉEL de ce que nous avons vu et vécu :

- Tout d'abord, nous sommes vraiment très bien encadré par notre coordonatrice et notre traductrice tout au long de notre voyage. Nous ne sommes jamais laissé à nous-mêmes. Ces personnes travaillent POUR nous et nous n'avons eu aucune difficulté à leur faire entièrement confiance. Elles savent ce qu'elles font et elles travaillent TRÈS fort pour que les parents trouvent les enfants parfaits pour eux.

- Bien entendu, il se peut que les rencontres au département d'adoption (là où nous consultons les bases de données) ne soient pas fructueuses. C'est pourquoi nous avons droit à trois

rencontres. Nous nous sommes rendus à la deuxième rencontre avant de trouver LA bonne fratrie ! Mais que les choses soient claires : Jamais nous n'avons eu de pression pour prendre des enfants malades ou handicapés. On ne fait que nous présenter ces fiches rapidement, sans insister.

- Si des parents décident de visiter une fratrie qui semble intéressante et qu'après cette visite, ils ne désirent pas les adopter pour quelques raisons que ce soit, ils ont le droit de finalement dire « non » et de revenir à un autre rendez-vous au centre d'adoption. (C'est NOTRE choix et il faut être honnête envers nous-mêmes).
- Les enfants sont divisés par groupes d'âges dans des orphelinats distincts (même principe que dans les écoles). Nos deux garçons étaient ensemble et notre fille dans un autre. Nous avons donc pu voir la réalité de deux orphelinats différents. En Ukraine, les orphelinats ont très peu d'aide du gouvernement et fonctionnent presque exclusivement avec des commandites.

Celui des garçons où se trouvent des enfants de 0 à 7 ans est assez riche et ressemble beaucoup à aux CPE du Québec. Tandis que celui de notre fille, où se trouvent des enfants de 8 à 17 ans, est plus pauvre, sombre et froid. Mais dans un cas comme dans l'autre, ce que nous remarquons tout de suite c'est l'effort qui est mis en œuvre pour que les enfants soient heureux, nourris, habillés, éduqués, stimulés et épanouis. Le personnel est réellement attaché à ces enfants et veulent leur bien malgré leurs moyens financiers différents. Cela nous a beaucoup touché de voir combien les enfants sont attachés à toutes ces personnes qui prennent soins d'eux (professeurs, nounous, directrice, surveillantes). En plus de faire l'école, ils apprennent la danse, la musique, les sports, etc.

• Ensuite pour ce qui est de l'âge, nous avons très rapidement réalisé que nous avons bien fait d'augmenter notre limite. La fratrie que nous avons choisie est composée de deux garçons (3 et 5 ans) et d'une fille de 7 ans. Pendant les nombreuses semaines où nous visitons nos enfants à tous les jours, nous avons aussi connu les autres enfants de leurs groupes. Ce sont des enfants allumés, sociables, curieux, généreux, souriants, et débrouillards. Nos appréhensions face à l'âge s'étaient envolées. Nous comprenions tout à

fait ce que la directrice de notre agence nous avait expliqué (qu'il y avait beaucoup de belles et bonnes familles d'enfants plus vieux en santé) ! L'âge nous fait peur au départ parce que nous ne savons pas à quoi nous attendre et nous entendons toute sorte de choses à ce sujet.

La réalité en Ukraine, c'est qu'il y a réellement plusieurs belles et bonnes familles en parfaite santé et avec des enfants plus vieux qui attendent d'être adoptés.

• Ce qui est aussi intéressant, c'est que pour les enfants plus vieux il est facile de comprendre la situation. Le fait de savoir qu'ils partent vivre avec une nouvelle famille chaleureuse et accueillante les rendent fiers. Ils sont conscients que c'est une belle opportunité pour eux et que c'est pour le mieux ! Notre fille nous a clairement dit qu'elle était heureuse de partir avec ses frères et que nous formerions une grande famille ! Elle apprend déjà quelques mots en français, elle est très intelligente et allumée.

• Finalement, en Ukraine, les enfants qui ne sont malheureusement pas adoptés ont un avenir très incertain. À 18 ans, ils ne sont plus pris en charge par les orphelinats-écoles et sont laissés à eux-mêmes. Beaucoup d'entre eux se retrouvent dans la rue.

Par ce témoignage, nous ne désirons pas vous faire voir l'Adoption comme étant simple et toujours rose, car il y a aussi des moments difficiles et remplis d'émotions. Nous ne savons pas non plus à ce stade ce que nous réserve notre vie de famille à moyen et long terme, mais ce que nous savons, c'est que nous sommes très à l'aise avec notre choix ! Nous recommandons à quiconque qui désire adopter que de considérer une fratrie en Ukraine est certainement **une très bonne option**, mais surtout de considérer adopter des enfants plus âgés et de **ne pas avoir peur** !

Grâce à **TDH pour les enfants**, nous avons maintenant trois beaux enfants en bonne santé et plus vieux que ce nous avons imaginé au tout début, qui sont déjà très attachés à nous et qui demandaient une famille. Nous avons vu beaucoup d'autres enfants géniaux, de tous âges qui n'attendent que vous !

Bonne chance!

*Yannik and Valérie
and Anna(7), Vania(5) and Valik(3)*



Family Feature: Fulfilled and Thankful

Dear Maria, Dorinda and Thuy,

We wanted to use the holiday time to update you on our family life. What a joy it is to finally be a family! Eight weeks have already passed since the first time we met our daughter Lia who just turned 18 months old. We are living a wonderful combination of joy, worry, learning, adjustment and a little fatigue!

Our little girl who was frightened for the first days with us is now blossoming, discovering and learning quickly. She is adjusting to life and learning to love in a whole new way. Slowly but surely she is learning that she can depend on us. Every day she surprises us with her adaptability, her talents and her moods.

We are learning to understand her needs and her challenges and most of all we are learning to be parents.

We are certainly living the biggest adventure of our lives! We are fulfilled and thankful that life has brought us Lia, a healthy and intelligent little girl.

Lia already makes the same facial expressions as her dad and loves spaghetti like her mom! She loves playing outside but she's not too sure about walking in the snow. She really loves the swing we have installed for her in the living room. Lia doesn't speak much yet, but she understands a lot of words and simple instructions. From morning to night, she keeps us busy doing puzzles, reading books, and laughing.

Life is good. We wake up every morning full of gratitude and, of course, excited to spend another day in Lia's company.

We thank you for your presence, support and your generosity during the last few months.

We wish you a happy holiday with your family and loved ones.

Love, simplicity, calm and joy!

*Caro, Lia and François
Translated by : Lee-Anne Maier*



Bonjour Maria, Dorinda et Thuy

Nous profitons de ce temps des fêtes pour vous donner des nouvelles de notre vie de famille. Quelle joie d'être enfin une famille! Déjà 8 semaines se sont écoulées depuis notre première rencontre avec notre fille Lia (24 octobre), qui vient d'avoir 18 mois. Nous vivons un heureux mélange de grandes joies, d'inquiétudes, d'apprentissages, d'apprivoisement et un peu de fatigue, avouons-le!

La petite fille effrayée des premiers jours s'épanouit, découvre et apprend vite. Elle apprivoise la vie et l'amour d'une nouvelle façon. Tranquillement elle comprendra qu'elle peut compter sur nous! Chaque jour nous apporte de belles surprises sur son adaptation, ses talents et ses humeurs.

On apprend à la connaître, à comprendre ses besoins et ses épuisements et on apprend surtout à être parents.

Nous vivons certainement la plus grande aventure de notre vie et nous sommes comblés et reconnaissants envers la vie de nous avoir mis Lia sur notre route, une petite fille en santé et intelligente.

Elle répète déjà les grimaces de son papa et elle adore le spaghetti comme sa maman! Elle aime bien aller dehors, mais n'est pas trop certaine d'aimer marcher dans la neige. Elle adore sa super balançoire installée au salon. Elle parle peu, mais comprend beaucoup de mots et consignes simples. Du matin jusqu'au soir, elle nous demande toute notre

attention en passant des blocs aux casse-têtes, du tunnel aux livres, des pleurs aux éclats de rire!

Bref la vie est belle et nous nous réveillons chaque matin avec beaucoup de gratitude et surtout, avec une grande hâte d'entamer une nouvelle journée en sa compagnie.

**Nous tenons à vous remercier pour
votre présence, votre accompagnement
et votre générosité durant les derniers mois.**

De plus, nous vous souhaitons de très Joyeuses Fêtes avec votre famille et ceux que vous aimez :

Amour, simplicité, repos et plaisir!

Caro, Lia et François

Family Feature: My trip to Vietnam



I'm seven and I play hockey at George Bell arena in Toronto and I'm in grade two. I play winger. In September, my mom and dad and I flew to Ho Chi Minh City to adopt my little brother. I was born in Vietnam, in Vung Tau and my mom and dad adopted me seven years ago. The flight was really long and on the way there we stopped in Hong Kong, where my parents used to live. In Hong Kong, I loved the shrimp dumplings, hiking up the Peak and riding on the ferry. But soon it was time to go to Vietnam.

It made me feel good to go back to Vietnam because I would be closer to my birth parents. I thought a lot about my birth parents, I guess I just missed them. Going back made me feel better, even though I'm not sure who they are or where they are.

Vietnam was cool and exciting because we were going to get my little brother Wilson. My favorite food in Vietnam was eating barbecue meat skewers on the street, they were very tasty. Although mommy said not to eat them in the taxi, I ate a tiny bit in the cab. I ate six meat skewers at one time and it made me feel good because my stomach was so full.

Going to the war museum was really interesting too, the tanks and the airplanes were very cool. Riding on the scooter was really fun, but I thought I was going to fall off. If you crashed it would really hurt. It's sort of made me nervous because only the adults wore helmets, not kids. Going into the Cu Chi tunnels was really interesting. They were dark and narrow and exciting. I learned a lot about the war in Vietnam and that Vietnamese people were really brave.

My little brother Wilson only knew how to say "go go go". The first time I met Wilson, it was a tiny bit frightening because I never had a baby before. The baby home was cool, but it made me sad a bit because I thought of my birth parents. But I was excited because of Wilson and it was great to see all of the babies. And that night when we first took Wilson back to our hotel, he played in the pool with us and then fell asleep. The next few days we just spent time with Wilson getting to know him.



Going back to Vung Tau, the city I was born in was great, because it was fun digging in the sand and the hotels were really nice and tropical. Trying surf boarding for the first time and playing in the waves with my Dad was awesome. Riding on the jet ski and going on the waves when Daddy let me drive, it was very cool. Vung Tau is a beautiful place.

It was good to go back to my baby home in Vung Tau. We took toys and soccer balls for the kids at the baby home and that made me feel good. But it wasn't how I was planning it to be. I thought it would look a bit different. I felt a bit bad for the kids who were still there, because living at a baby home is like going to daycare forever. I met the director of the baby home and she remembered me from when I was a baby – that was nice.

On the way home to Canada, we stopped and visited the Forbidden City in China, which was beautiful and enormous. When we got home from Vietnam, I woke up early the next day to go and play hockey. My new little brother Wilson loves hockey now too.

Max Roderick

Family Feature: "Surviving the wait"



Mom and Vyvy selfie!

When I was asked to write a piece for the TDH newsletter about "surviving the wait", I agreed with one condition: I would be honest. Since my own adoption story began, it has been one of my life's missions to help others find their families by sharing truth and knowledge. But until recently, I didn't know whether I would ever get my own happy ending.

I waited for a child for more than six-and-a-half years. That time was dark, desperate, heartbreaking and torturous. For most of the wait, I felt like I was a salmon dying a gradual death as I swam upstream to spawn, while a dam was being built at the end. I share these things not to discourage you, but to let you know that, against nearly impossible odds, I made it. And I know that you can too. If my story helps one waiting parent get through one more day, it's worth writing.

In 2006, I reached the magic number when it was time to stop waiting for "what if" and start living for "what is"--a single woman with the desire to have a family and give a home to someone in need. With my sister and her husband waiting to adopt a baby at that time, I knew it wasn't easy. (What I didn't know was that I had no clue how much more difficult things would become). My sister's friend Kate, then a mother of two adopted girls, told me to close my eyes and picture my family. I saw a little girl. Kate told me not to stop fighting until I had her. I chose Ecuador, a fateful decision that would turn into the fight of my life.

Three years later, in 2009, my agency and its umbrella

corporation were driven into bankruptcy by alleged criminal activity, and I lost the promise of my future daughter. She didn't have a name or a face, but she was as real to me as the love I had for her in my heart. For several months I grieved the loss of my daughter, her country, three years of my life and a pile of money gone. Then I had to pick up the pieces and choose one of three (for me, undesirable) options: give up on having a family, try to have a baby alone, or start from scratch.

It wasn't logical, but I knew in my heart that my child was out there, dreaming the same dream of family under the same moon. I just had to make the best decision at that fork in the road to find her. So in 2010, I chose to start from scratch in Vietnam. Shortly after, everything there changed.

In 2012, with little movement in Vietnam's regular program, I was losing faith. I needed a way to take control of the wait, for the sake of my well-being. Another friend/adoptive mom suggested that I give myself a deadline. So I decided that if I had no match or referral by the end of the year, I would make a new plan for my life (Adopt more cats? Or maybe a dog? Visit the fertility clinic? Grow vegetables? Learn to crochet??).

That summer, as my deadline loomed, the universe sent me a much needed message that it may not be time to give up. TDH told me about a little girl who had recently been found in Ho Chi Minh City. Her exact age was unknown, she may or may not become adoptable in the special needs program, and her special need may be a serious medical risk that I had never before considered. But would I be interested? It seemed like a recipe for more disappointment. Initially it was a "no" in my head. But adoption is not a matter for the head, and from somewhere deep in my heart arose a "maybe".

After much research and reflection, my heart took my head by the hand and I said "yes" to a match with a still nameless, faceless maybe. Somehow my heart knew that she was my girl, and I was meant to take care of her--in sickness or in health. That "yes" set off a chain of miracles that began in

September 2012, when we were unofficially matched. Almost a year later, on August 9, 2013, I adopted my beautiful, funny and loving daughter Vyvy. From the moment we met, it has felt like we were always meant to be together. I believe that we were destined to be family since

(Continued on page 19)

(Continued from page 18)

long before our story began. When I think of the multitude of events that had to happen at precise moments in time on opposite sides of the planet to bring us together, I know there had to be divine intervention (with a hand from TDH, of course!).

Vyvy and I were recently blessed with yet another miracle. We received the results of her medical tests: she is perfectly healthy, and what was a risk of hepatitis A or B turned out to be antibodies that were in her system as the result of a vaccination. My leap of faith brought great rewards!

During the waiting years, I went through the motions of all the things adopters are encouraged to do to survive the wait—I decorated my daughter's room, bought out Gymboree, exercised, blogged, built a supportive network, travelled, bought a kayak, etc. These things helped, and they were important, and you should do them too. But the message that I want to share, that I believe is much more crucial, is this: what kept me fighting all those years--even through times when I didn't want to go on another day--was faith.

The poet Khalil Gibran said "Faith is a knowledge within the heart, beyond the reach of proof". For as long as I wanted a child, even when it seemed the whole world was telling me to give up, I knew in my heart that I was meant to adopt. Without that faith, I would not have survived an epic journey that included two agency bankruptcies, a broken heart and more disappointments than any waiting parent should have to bear.

The wait to adopt is needlessly long, painful and fraught with uncertainty. It makes no sense that there are families waiting for years while so many children are growing up in orphanages around the world. Regardless, you must have faith that your own wait is part of the divine plan for your life. You must listen to your heart and make decisions that will lead you to your vision of family. That vision may not even be the same as the one you started with, but trust me, it's part of the plan.

Hold on to the faith and keep fighting, because I know that miracles will happen for you too. They probably won't happen as fast as you wish, and they won't be the same as ours; but they will be equally beautiful and magical. And one day you too will look back on your journey with the understanding that it had to be dark for you to find your shining star. Keep looking up.

Karen Mayer (bebecat2012@yahoo.com)



Vyvy with her face painted as a dog.



Vyvy being silly in cat pyjamas.

Family Feature: 'The Upside-down Kingdom'



The youngest two of our 16 children are Vietnamese-born. These two youngest are delightful three-year-old boys.

Ransom Minh joined our family in July 2011. From his birth parents he has inherited a diminutive stature, an enchanting smile, twinkling eyes, and abundant shiny black hair that always lies perfectly around his cherubic brown

face. Origins of his explosive temper are questionable: heredity? hard beginnings? just because?

Shepherd Khanh, just three months older than Ransom, joined our family in January 2013. He is long and lean. He has his birth parent's dimples, wide eyes, and wild hair. He finds much of life hilariously delightful; and responds with squinty-eyed, open-mouthed, throw-back-your-head laughter.

The most wondrous thing these two lads received from their brave birth mothers is *life* itself. In a nation where, according to some sources, abortions outstrip live births, this gift of life is no small miracle. We honour their birth mothers for their sacrifice.

But there is something else our sons inherited from their birth mothers (something that at least one of these women has herself since lost the battle against) – Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

This is the reality for our sons. *There is no shame*. It is the issue *that is a non-issue*.

Our sons receive three different antiretroviral medications every 12 hours. We anticipate they will continue this regime for the rest of their lives, or until a cure is found, or until they are miraculously healed. They visit a pediatric infectious disease specialist every three or four months, and have regular blood draws that measure, among other things, viral loads and CD4 counts.

HIV is a very fragile virus. Transmission does not occur with normal household contact. It is *not* transmitted through tears, saliva, mucous, vomit, urine or feces. You cannot get HIV by sharing cups, baths, toilets, or swimming pools with an infected person. It is not transmitted through air or insects.

HIV is only transmitted through sexual contact, blood-to-blood contact (i.e. contaminated needles, transfusions), or mother-to-child (during pregnancy, childbirth, or

breastfeeding).

The prognosis for children on treatment for their HIV is excellent. They are expected to live long, normal lives. In developed nations, HIV is now considered a chronic illness rather than the terminal disease it used to be. This is not the case for those HIV infected children living in resource-poor settings, where 50% of infected and untreated children are not expected to live past the age of two.

As a large family brought together by birth and adoption, we are not strangers to pain, doubt, and brokenness. Parenting children from hard places – abandonment, trauma, neglect – brings struggles and questions that keep us humbly on our knees. HIV is the least of our problems!

As Christ-followers, we are part of an upside-down Kingdom (i.e. the first shall be last; we must lose our life to find it; the least shall be the greatest). In a sorrowful, upside-down sense, our sons' burden of HIV is our blessing. If they were not HIV positive, they would not be our sons: they may have remained in their birth family (God's first choice for all children, in an unbroken world), or they would have been referred to another family who had waited *much* longer to welcome a child.

But they are *our* sons. We get to love them and nurture them. We get their hugs and their kisses. We get to hear them sing and laugh. We get to stand alongside them when life's questions and storms (re)visit them. And we get to watch them grow into strong, good men whose lives will impact the world and further Christ's upside-down Kingdom!

Soli Deo Gloria

Julie Berger (djberger@platinum.ca)



News and Current Events

TDH Quarterly newsletter format update

You will note that the masthead of our newsletter has changed this time. In spite of many efforts to produce a French newsletter, it has not happened. Nonetheless, many Quebec families have asked to receive the newsletter and have even contributed articles to it. We have also tried in our statistics to include those for Quebec as well as Ontario and the rest of Canada. We would now like to formalize this by **inviting articles, adoption announcements, and letters to the editor to be submitted in English or French**. So for the future there will be English and French articles, some but not necessarily all items will be translated (and to that end we would welcome volunteers to lend their translation skills).

Reader feedback and comments are always welcome by emailing our Editor-at-large, Brendan Cavanaugh at: brendan@tdh.ca or our Editor, Sharon Kashino, at: sharon@tdh.ca

Dans cette édition vous pourrez constater que nous avons modifié l'entête de notre Newsletter. Malgré nos intentions de produire une infolettre francophone, il n'a pas été possible de concrétiser ce projet. Cependant, plusieurs familles ont fait la demande pour recevoir le «Newsletter» certains ont même contribué en produisant divers articles. Nous incluons les statistiques du Québec, de l'Ontario et du reste du Canada. Maintenant, ***nous souhaiterions soutenir ces efforts en invitant nos lecteurs francophones à soumettre des articles, l'annonce de leur adoption ou des lettres à l'éditeur***. Ainsi dans le futur, nous pourrions lire des articles en français et/ou anglais. Toutefois ces articles ne seront pas systématiquement traduits dans les deux langues. Pour atteindre cet objectif, nous avons besoin des services de traducteurs bénévoles. Vous êtes bienvenus de vous joindre à notre équipe.

TDH and the Future

Some of us older folks are rather proud of the fact that we can do email. It shows that we are *au courant*. It implies that we are able to cope with the faster pace and the quicker images on the TV and movie screen. It suggests that we are 'with it', - To a point.

Then we are confronted with the lighting speed and the abbreviated format of Facebook, Twitter and the slew of lesser communications sites that younger people use – and we falter. Some of us are not too sure that the trends towards 'faster' in instant communication are really progress. Virtue means not too much and not too little but just the right amount. And there is such a thing as being 'too fast'.

Recently a "tech savvy" Lee-Anne Maier, has contacted us and said that she would like to manage a Facebook and Twitter account/pages for TDH. Lee-Anne is a primary school teacher in Toronto. She hopes to adopt a special needs child.

We have encouraged her to go ahead and get things roll-

ing. Christine Morra set up a Facebook page for TDH Canada when she managed the two Toronto Galas. Lee-Anne has now been made an administrator of the page and will be focusing on updating the page and keeping it alive and active.

To find the page on Facebook, simply search for "TDH Canada". Be sure to "like" the page and encourage your friends and family to do the same.

We hope that the page will serve as a hub for our community. Feel free to share family photos and stories about how TDH Canada has touched your lives. It will be a great place to make connections and share information.

Our twitter account is also ready to go. If you are on Twitter, please follow @TDHCanada. Join in the conversation and spread the word!

We are looking forward to moving into the future together as a community.

*Brendan Cavanaugh, Secretary General
(brendan@tdh.ca)*

Request from Dorinda

Dear Friends of TDH,

Please see in this issue of the newsletter information on a concert to take place at the Rialto Theatre on April 13 for the benefit of TDH. It is a rare opportunity for us, and one that promises to raise a significant amount of money for TDH.

But in order to be successful, we need your help. Tickets are only \$50 (\$110 with dinner, if you choose this option), with a tax receipt of \$25 per ticket. The Rialto holds 750 persons.

We are looking for people to be "ambassadors", that is, to accept to sell 16 tickets (two tables), and of course people to buy tickets. To that end, Mario Bouchard, an adoptive parent volunteer with TDH, has offered to call our donor list to promote the concert and to solicit sales of tickets. Below you will find some information about the concert, about Giorgia, and what makes this concert so special.

We would appreciate your consideration of this event, and hope to see you there in great numbers.

Dorinda

Adoption Literature for Children

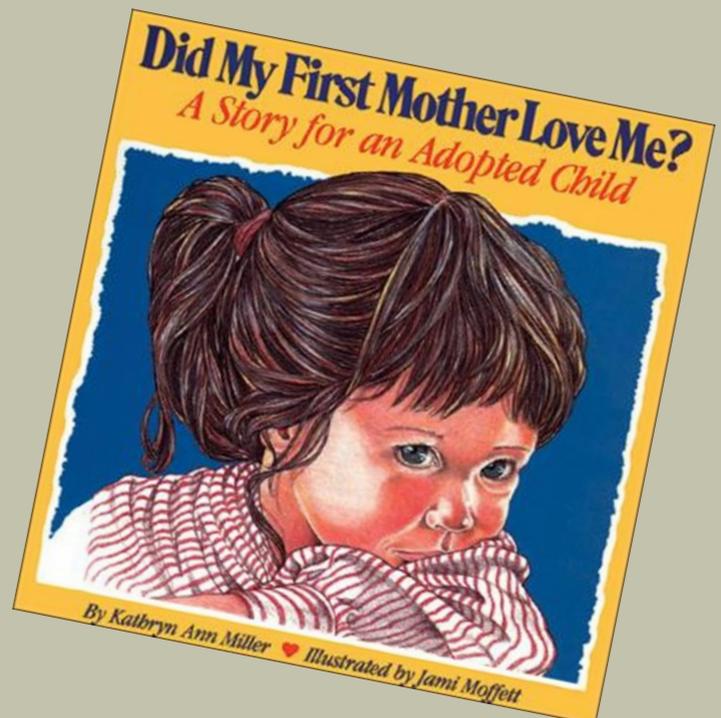
Did My First Mother Love Me? A Story for an Adopted Child

Written by Ann Miller, Illustrated by Jami Moffett

The question "Did my first mother love me?" is answered through a letter from the child's birth mother. The birthmother, in her letter, describes her pregnancy, her love for the child, the life that she wanted for that child and that even though she could not provide all of those things herself, that "all of my wishes for you have come true".

Although this is a specific letter from one birth mother to her child, it would definitely have an application for children who have never received a letter like this, or like in the case of most international adoptions, have very limited information about their birth parents. The letter provides the child with access to the birth mother's point of view. The letter is well written and accessible to even very young children.

The second part of the book is a guide for parents,



"Talking With Your Child About Adoption" by Jeanne Warren Lindsay (who has written several books on the subject of adoption) that provides a brief overview of when and how to talk about adoption with your child.

Lee-Anne Maier (lee-annemaier@hotmail.com)

Films About Adoption



Stuck

"Both Ends Burning" is an American campaign that "promotes adoption as a solution for children without parents". Their vision includes the argument that "growing up in a family is a child's most basic human right" (<https://bothendsburning.org/about-us/vision-mission/>). The focus of the campaign is on inter-country adoption and the red tape that gets in the way of children being placed with families.

"Both Ends Burning" produced a documentary titled **Stuck**. Even though the political focus of the film is based on some United States laws, the international laws and themes of the film are still very relevant to waiting and adoptive parents in Canada.

Admittedly, I cried through most of this film. As a waiting parent, I related to the hopeful adoptive families and my heart broke for the children who are awaiting placement.

The film includes interviews with family members, adoption lawyers, medical professionals, politicians, orphanage workers and adoptees.

Stuck provides a general outline of the process of an international adoption from research, to home study, to referral to bringing the child home. The film draws attention to the fact that significant

delays can be caused by small snags in the paperwork caused by things like missing medical information or parental histories of the children.

The stories of several families are documented in the film as they wait for their children via inter-country adoption. We see the children waiting and growing up in the institutions while the parents are waiting for years at home. When the children make it home with their families we see them adapting to their new surroundings.

Medical professionals in the film provide evidence to show how children thrive when placed with a family and evidence of failure to thrive when they are raised in institutions and orphanages.

An adoption lawyer in the film discusses the role of Unicef in reducing inter-country adoptions as well as both the benefits and the flaws within the Hague convention.

"Something wrong with a system that takes 3 years to get a child home".

Watch the trailer at: <http://buy.stuckdocumentary.com/>

Lee-Anne Maier (lee-annemaier@hotmail.com)

Literature for Adults

'Rich Man Poor Man' - a summary

Rich Man, Poor Man,
Beggar Man, Thief,
Doctor, Lawyer,
Indian Chief.

The nursery rhyme in the box is the American version of the English "Tinker, Tailor" nursery rhyme. It is a versatile device in that it is a counting game, a nursery rhyme and fortune

telling song traditionally played in England, that can be used to count cherry stones, buttons, daisy petals and other items. Its American version is commonly used by children for "counting out," e.g. for choosing who shall be "It" in a game of tag. It is widely referenced in literature, television, music, film, and anime.

It is a predictive rhyme; it is always about the future.

It is also the inspiration and title of a poem by the American poet Josephine Preston Peabody (1874-1922). By the time Josephine reached her forties she was focused on social injustice. Her poem is mostly about those whose future along the highway of life is bleak – "poor man, beggar man, thief". The poem expresses frustration at the negative outcomes the future holds for many.

As parents of adopted children, all of us are concerned to give our children the best opportunity we can by doing our best to bring them up well. Different people have different perspective on what "bringing them up well" actually means.

Accountants notoriously only speak "Money" and only write on spreadsheets; so Accountant Tom Corley is an unlikely author. Nevertheless, Tom Corley has expressed his views on effective upbringing by studying the rich and the poor from his financial perspective.

As a financial planner Tom Corley spent five years observing more than 350 "rich" and "poor" people, how they live, work and even sleep and captured them all in his book, "Rich Habits: The Daily Success Habits of Wealthy Individuals." (2010) [Paperback, \$11.50 on Amazon.] He defined "wealthy" as earning at least \$160,000 annually and holding at least \$3.2 million in assets. "Poor" was income under \$30,000 a year and less than \$5,000 in assets.

Tom has actually produced some objective data on the results of the Nurture part of upbringing in terms of lifestyle. That statistical objectivity is a very strong indication of effective lifestyle habits; they are worth serious consideration.

"I realized, it's not so much what's going on in business, it's the daily habits, the activities, that are the reason for your wealth or your poverty," says Corley." His views obviously have a broad application to successful child rearing as well as lifestyle.

This article does not replace the book, but maybe it will be enough to start some parents thinking about the future of their child in terms of what they do now. I have selected some of the points he makes and grouped them in a way that they make sense to me: Physical, Purpose, Reading, Social, Influence, and Children.

PHYSICAL POINTS:

In terms of simple physical activity 76% of the rich exercise aerobically; 70% eat less than 300 junk food calories per day; and 44% wake up 3 hours before going to work to get things they consider important done. They care about their health and are interested in what they do at work.

(Continued on page 25)

In contrast, only 23% of the poor exercised aerobically; 90% eat more than 300 junk calories per day, and only 3% bother to wake up 3 hours before going to work daily. They do not do much; they eat a lot of fast food; and they do not care much about their work or anything else.

PURPOSEFULNESS:

Of the rich, 80% have decided to focus on a single, clear goal; 81% keep a to-do list to keep them focused; and 67% faithfully write down their daily goals.

Of the poor, only 12% focus on a single, clear goal; only 19% keep a to-do list and update it regularly; and only 17% bother to write down their daily goals.

READING

Among the rich, 86% admit they love to read. In contrast, only 26% of the poor say they love to read.

Among the rich, 88% read daily for at least 30 minutes on topics pertaining to their education or their work; 63% even listen to audio books on their drive to work; and as a correlative practice, 67% only watch 1 hour or less TV in a day.

Among the poor, a mere 2% read for 30 minutes on topic pertaining to their general education or the work; only 5% listen to audio book on the way to work; and only 23% limit their TV watching to 1 hour a day.

SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

Among the rich, only 6% say they indulge in gossip; whereas among the poor 79% admit to gossiping.

Along the same line of behavior, among the rich only 6% blurt out whatever they have on their mind; 79% network with colleagues and friends

for 5 or more hours a month; and 86% believe in life-long education and self-improvement.

Along these same lines of behavior, among the poor, 69% insist on saying whatever happens to be on their mind – there is no filter; 16% network with colleagues for 5 or more hours a month; and only 5% believe in the importance of life-long education and self-improvement.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS INFLUENCING BEHAVIOR

Only 23% of the rich gamble; but 52% of the poor gamble.

Of the rich, 84% believe that good habits create opportunity or bring 'good luck'; and 76% believe that bad habits create detrimental "bad luck" and ruin opportunities.

Of the poor, only 4% believe that good habits create opportunities or 'good luck'; and 9% believe that bad habits create detrimental 'bad luck' or ruin opportunities.

CHILDREN

74% of the rich teach their kids daily successful habits and encourage their efforts; 63% make kids read 2 or more non-fiction books a month; and 70% make kids volunteer 10 or more hours a month.

1% of the poor teach their kids daily successful habits and encourage their efforts; 3% make their kids read 2 or ore non-fiction books a month, and 3% make kids volunteer for 10 or more hours a month.

As the twig is bent, so grows the tree.

-Brendan Cavanaugh (brendan@tdh.ca)

Broader ADOPTION ISSUES: The Optional Protocol

TDH tries to steer clear of politics. But, there was a new international treaty adopted by the UN in December 2011. It is called the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure* (OP3 CRC) – or simply, ‘the *Optional Protocol*’.

We have received an email from Cheryl Milne, Chair of the *Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children* and Abigail Brown of *Plan Canada*. They are urging Canada to ratify the new treaty so more children can access international justice for rights abuses. So, we are passing on the word.

The UN is not generally an action-oriented organization; it is a forum for discussion. Characteristically, the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* notably did not contain any mechanism for victimized children to seek justice internationally when their home states would do nothing for them. Moreover, what the UN does or does not consider ‘a child’s right’ is yet another issue.

Nevertheless, the fact that the Optional Protocol was passed by the UN is considered a “major human rights victory” for children around the world. That is, if a child can actually somehow bring its victimization and abuse into some political focus, and if their country has ratified the treaty, then there is now a means to have the situation reviewed by a UN body of 18 independent experts responsible for ensuring the implementation of the treaty by hearing the case, agreeing that the child has been abused, and complain to the child’s state. In the world of international politics, that is a big step. True, taking advantage of this concrete

process, like any legalistic process, will require a large amount of help, time, and money, none of which children typically have at their disposal. But at least there is now a process to be accessed.

TDH supports it. But realistically, this is essentially a public relations gambit. As such it has its value and use. But whether any individual, abused child will ever benefit from the Optional Protocol is an open question. In the best case, all the UN Committee can do is officially complain to some official. Whatever power these conventions have stems from the level of their popular support; people feel a convention’s basic idea is a good one, so they go along with it, generally without knowing too much about the actual terms of the convention. The fact that an enormous number of children worldwide whose hope for a family and a life with security and opportunity through intercountry adoption has been and continues to be destroyed in the name of *The Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption* (or *Hague Adoption Convention*) does not engender much hope that this new treaty will be of any real benefit to children.

Brendan Cavanaugh (brendan@tdh.ca)

Making a Difference

Over the holidays a fundraising appeal went out with a goal of raising \$60,000. Many thanks to the families who contributed. The \$2985 raised is being put to good use. The invitation to contribute to the work of TDH is included below in the hopes that more of our readers will contribute to the campaign, either in a single amount or as an ongoing participant in our 'Everyday in Everyway' campaign.

Dear Friends,

Because of TDH Canada there are thousands of Canadian couples who will be celebrating the Christmas Holiday Season with their children this year. Some of their children are small enough to still believe in Santa Claus, others are all grown-up and have their own children. The greatest gift they all have received is that they have each other; they are a family. Most of you to whom we are sending this letter either are one of those families or hope to become one of those families.

For more than forty years TDH has done its best to bring together thousands of couples who need children and children who need parents. During that time neither the structure nor the actual work of TDH Canada has changed much in principle, even though many of the demanding details have changed greatly

Now, as we look forward to 2014, the global practice of international adoption and, in particular, we at TDH Canada, are facing serious challenges, both internationally and nationally. There is no lack of either adoptive parents or adoptable children, but there is a serious lack of political good will at the political and bureaucratic levels of society, and we can no longer rely solely on the fees from adopting families to support our continued work. So during this season of giving, we are asking for your serious support, both morally and financially. Our goal in this campaign is to raise \$60,000

Some of you have already sent donations during this past year. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your support. If you have not, gifts may be made online or postmarked by December 31 to count towards the 2013 taxation year.

We will continue to find ways to process international adoptions, to support adoptive families and to identify adoptable children, because we believe children have a right to a family, and parents are ready to offer their homes and their hearts to these children.

On behalf of the adoptive families who are able to celebrate the spirit of this season because of TDH's efforts on their behalf, I thank you for your good will and spirit of generosity. I wish for you the experience of a most joyful family holiday season.

Dorinda Cavanaugh, Director

*donate online today at:
www.tdhontario.tdh.ca*

Yes! I'll help Every Day in Every Way!

Enclosed is my VOID cheque as well as my name, mailing address and email address.

Please deduct, from my bank account, the monthly amount of:

\$25/month \$50/month I prefer to give \$_____/month

You may alter the amount of your gift or end your contributions at any time by contacting our office. You will receive a tax receipt for your total donations the following spring.

Alternatively, you may phone Jose Garcia at (514) 937-3325 to make donation arrangements.

Mail your form and void cheque to:

TDH Canada Inc.
36 Home Ave., P.O. Box 963
Vankleek Hill, Ontario K0B 1R0
Fax: (613) 216-2565
Telephone: (613) 482-6306
Charitable Reg.#: 0331249-11-08

**OR donate online today at:
www.tdhontario.tdh.ca**

GIORGIA FUMANTI EN CONCERT BÉNÉFICE POUR LES ENFANTS 13 AVRIL AU THÉÂTRE RIALTO

Le majestueux Opéra de Paris de 1875 du Second Empire de Napoléon est l'une des plus splendides et extravagantes architectures de la décadence du XVIII^e siècle. Ses magnifiques vestibules étaient destinés à offrir aux spectateurs un endroit où se promener et se côtoyer pendant les entractes. Il a inspiré de nombreuses et respectables imitations sur le plan international; l'une d'entre elles est le théâtre Rialto construit en 1924, situé sur l'avenue du parc à Montréal qui conserve un style Néo-Baroque.

C'est dans ce cadre spectaculaire du Rialto, supporté par une acoustique et un matériel de sonorisation de haute qualité, que la gracieuse **Giorgia Fumanti**, acclamée mondialement, proposera un programme rempli de mélodies populaires tirées de ses récents albums et des succès des plus grandes stars, telles que Abba, Vangelis, Queen, David Foster, Gilbert Bécaud, Jean-Pierre Ferland, Francis Cabrel et Yves Duteil.

Elle fait partie de cette exceptionnelle catégorie d'interprètes pouvant combiner avec brio le style classique, solennel et disciplinés du monde de l'opéra tout en livrant des prestations époustouflantes de Rock et de Pop avec une énergie sans limite. Giorgia surnommée parfois la « diva aux pieds nus » est plus qu'une artiste de scène; elle est charismatique, sa présence magnétique réchauffe le cœur du public. Tel le Pape Francis par sa simplicité et sa spontanéité, elle réussit à toucher l'âme de



son auditoire. Être présent dans son auditoire est une expérience unique. D'origine Italienne, Cette star du Québec ne manque jamais de laisser une empreinte éternelle sur le cœur de son public. Elle possède la voix, le charisme et la présence sur scène qui caractérise les grands artistes qui peuvent séduire et fasciner par leur élégance et leur force. Néanmoins elle reste étonnamment humble malgré son unique talent.

A titre personnel, Giorgia ressent une profonde préoccupation pour le désarroi des enfants abandonnés et négligés. Le 13 avril, au Rialto, Giorgia Fumanti offrira un concert-bénéfice au profit de TDH Canada, cet organisme de bienfaisance établi au Québec, œuvrant depuis plus de 40 ans à défendre les droits des enfants dans le monde entier. TDH supporte des projets pour les enfants et participe par le biais de l'adoption internationale à la création de familles au Québec.

Giorgia a toujours eu un attachement particulier pour les enfants, dans le passé, elle a servi comme Ambassadrice pour l'Association de paralysie cérébrale. Maintenant, elle a choisi de devenir Ambassadrice de TDH Canada afin d'apporter son soutien aux enfants négligés et orphelins.

Un spectacle unique pour une bonne cause - à ne pas manquer!

Billets disponibles : <http://www.theatrerialto.ca/spectacles/musique/1-358-giorgia-fumanti-concert-benefice-pour-tdh-canada.html> ou à TDH Canada (514) 937-3325 (pas de frais de billetterie)

PRIX DU BILLET

Souper + Spectacle (Parterre): 110\$*

Souper + Spectacle (Balcon): 100\$*

Spectacle Seulement (Parterre): 50\$

Spectacle Seulement (Balcon): 40\$

(taxes incluses / frais de billetterie en sus) Pour les tarifs de groupe, contactez-nous au (514) 770-7773

Reçu pour fins d'impôt de 25\$ par billet sera émis sur demande

GIORGIA FUMANTI TO PERFORM IN A BENEFIT CONCERT FOR CHILDREN APRIL 13 AT THE RIALTO THEATRE

The overall effect of the 1875 Paris Opera of the Napoleonic Second Empire is one of stunning extravagance and 18th century decadence. The magnificent foyers were meant to give the audience somewhere to people-watch and stroll during the intermissions. It has inspired many respectful copies internationally; one of them is the 1924 magnificently restored neo-baroque Rialto Theatre on Montreal's Park Avenue.

In this stunning setting of the Rialto with its high-quality acoustics and sound equipment, the internationally acclaimed and enchanting **Giorgia Fumanti** will be performing a program filled with popular melodies from her recent albums, hits from such stars as Abba, Vangelis, Queen, David Foster, Gilbert Bécaud, Jean-Pierre Ferland, Francis Cabrel, and Yves Duteil.

She is one of that rare breed of crossover performers who are able to successfully blend the formal and disciplined world of opera and classical with the loose and unstructured realm of rock and pop. But Giorgia is more than a stage artist; she is also a truly charismatic performer. She touches the emotions of her audience in an intimate fashion. She is sometimes dubbed the "barefoot diva", because like the charismatic Pope Francis, in her uniqueness she unexpectedly reaches out to touch the



commonness in her audience. To be present in her audience is an experience. The Italian-born Quebec star never fails to leave an indelible mark on the hearts of her audience. She possesses the voice, stage presence, and the charisma that characterizes great artists who can both seduce and mesmerize through their personal strength and their elegance, yet she remains surprisingly humble despite her unique gift.

As a person, Giorgia has a deep concern for emotionally abandoned and neglected children. On April 13, at the Rialto, Giorgia Fumanti will be offering a benefit concert for TDH Canada, a Quebec-based charity that has worked for over forty years to advocate for the rights of children worldwide, to support projects for children and to create families in Quebec for some children through international adoption. Giorgia

has always had a special attachment to children, and in the past she has served as Ambassador for the Cerebral Palsy Association. Now she has chosen to direct her energy towards helping neglected and orphaned children as an Ambassador for children through TDH Canada.

Do not miss the opportunity to hear and see this enchanting performer, while at the same time engaging in a worthwhile cause.

Seats are available through the Rialto Theatre (<http://www.theatrerialto.ca/en/programmation/music/1-358-giorgia-fumanti-benefit-concert-for-tdh-canada.html>) or by calling TDH Canada at (514) 937-3325 (no booking fees)

TICKET PRICE

Dinner & Show (Orchestra Seat): \$110*

Dinner & Show (Balcony Seat): \$100*

Show Only (Orchestra Seat): \$50

Show Only (Balcony Seat): \$40

(taxes included / booking fee not included) For group rates, please contact: (514) 770-7773

Tax receipt for \$25 per ticket issued on request

TDH quarterly newsletter

For content submissions, suggestions or comments: sharon@tdh.ca