

May 2005

Dear Friends,

This letter is written from our new office, please note our new address. We expected to feel sad about leaving our beautiful view but we are all so happy to be in the larger and very pleasant facilities that we haven't missed the view at all. We hope to have a dedication ceremony of some type in conjunction with the gathering of adoptive families here in Port Angeles the weekend of August 20th. (read about the gathering on AAI's web site.)

In the last newsletter I was talking about a compound in Ethiopia we were hoping to purchase to provide a better environment and to move all of the Layla and Wanna kids into one place. After several weeks of believing this would be the new Layla House, we learned that ownership of the property was very complicated and we were advised that it could take months to clear the title. So, Gail looked again. She found a much larger piece with buildings not quite as suitable but with plenty of space for future development. So, we are now looking into this possibility. Fund raising is continuing so that we will have funds available when the right place is found and we can do whatever repairs and updating is needed.

AAI has been invited to hold a fund raising event for our new Layla House at the Ethiopian Embassy in Washington DC. Ted and I plan to attend and AAI would be happy to send invitations to anyone who might like to attend. The date is May 21, a Saturday afternoon. There will be a traditional coffee ceremony. There will be a silent auction and items for the auction are also welcome. For an invitation or details you may contact Rita.

Many of you remember our concern for the many HIV positive children that were orphans but not adoptable through our program. We established a program and home to care for them, AHOPE. The Ministry of Justice later informed us that they felt it was a conflict to have an adoption program as well as a home for HIV positive children and the program was turned over to the Ethiopian couple that was managing it. Some financial problems came to light later and the couple was removed from their duties by the Ministry of Justice, a new board of directors was formed and the name changed back to AHOPE. The children in care there were given new HIV tests and 15 of them were determined to be HIV negative orphans and eligible for adoption. We have been asked to take these 15 youngsters into our adoption program, so right after Easter, (celebrated on April 24th this year in Ethiopia) they will be transferred to Layla and Wanna Houses. So once again we will be overcrowded, but we are delighted to help the se little kiddos and to again be working cooperatively with AHOPE. Also, you might be interested in seeing a PEOPLE Magazine article written about the AHOPE project which is in the May 2 issue.

With so much happening it is sometimes easy to loose sight of the important thing that we are doing and that is uniting kids with parents. I love getting the

post placement reports from the families and seeing how well kids are doing with their new families. Yesterday I got an email from the father of a family who, a year ago, adopted a girl about 7 with badly crossed eyes. He was talking about how well she is doing since she had her surgery. Without an adoptive family to care for her and provide the eye surgery her life would not have held much promise. What a blessing it is that there is a way to help these kids, and that there are families who will commit their lives to raising them.

Please remember AAI's fund raising efforts, this is the time when your financial gifts for the new facility, whatever it turns out to be, are needed most. If you haven't contributed, this would be a great time. If you need quilt raffle tickets to sell (they are easy to sell) be sure to let us know. And remember that you can donate on line with a credit card from AAI's web site.

Ted and I are about to slip away for a few days of vacation. We need to recharge ourselves. We will return in time for the Washington DC gathering, and after that I'll head back to Ethiopia.

Thanks to you all for your ongoing help and support.

Sincerely,

Merrily and Ted