

April 2007

Dear Friends,

This was a special week for AAI, the 3000th child placed by AAI joined his adoptive family. This child was typical of the kinds of kids we are so happy to place, part of a sibling group of three kids who were all adopted together by a family in Oregon. So many of the orphan children waiting for families at Layla House have sisters or brothers that need to be placed with them. We are delighted that these three could stay together.

We hope you are planning to attend the Family Gathering to be held starting June 22 in Port Angeles. We have so many great activities planned and look forward to seeing families and friends again. We will have officials from Thailand, Ethiopia, and also our coordinator from China, as special guests. If you need more information, please check our website.

I have been in San Antonio this week at a training conference for program directors of adoption agencies. I have belonged to this organization for 30 years and it is nice to see old friends. There has been a great deal of emphasis on agencies taking responsibility for all orphans, not just those who are being adopted. I was proud to think about our work with HIV+ kids, older kids for whom we provide sponsorships, and our new Opportunity House project. You are probably aware that an adoptive family provided funding to establish and operate Opportunity House for several months. It is now functioning and 8 youngsters with special needs are being cared for there. Some came from Layla House and others are from the neighborhood and only there during the day. There are almost no services for children with disabilities in Ethiopia and we hope that by providing extra training and stimulation for these Layla kids they will be more easily adopted. Currently we have a blind baby, a deaf boy, a girl in a wheel chair with eating issues as well, an autistic boy, and others. I'll keep you informed on this. It is located just about 200 yards from Layla and with both facilities we will be better to meet the needs of kids being referred to us.

You may be aware of the GRACE Fund, (Generosity Reduces Adoption Costs Everywhere) which helps us to provide a little extra financial support to facilitate the adoption of older children, those with disabilities, and those in large sibling groups. The emphasis is on assisting those children who have waited the longest for families. Since January, the GRACE Fund has helped 9 families, but at this time funds are running low. We rarely come right out and ask for money but this fund is replenished entirely by donations, so if you haven't given to AAI for awhile and could help with this, this is the time!!

Gradually we are going to be phasing out this mailed newsletter. Instead we will send the newsletter by email. Postage has become even more expensive and there is staff time and copying and paper expense as well. Many, if not most, of our donors are now making financial donations through the "Donate Now" button on

our web site. And with the email newsletter we can include more photos so you can have more of a sense of what we are talking about. So, we will be asking your to send an email with your email address, telling us to remove your name from the mailing list and add it to the email list. Those emails can come to me, at [aai@olympus.net](mailto:aai@olympus.net) or to Rita, at [ritaai@olympus.net](mailto:ritaai@olympus.net). This newsletter has been a part of AAI since 1983 when we were first licensed, and I plan to keep writing it, we will just use a different way to distribute it.

Let me close by telling you about a sibling set of three kids that have now been assigned to a family. The oldest is a girl about 12 years old, a boy age 7 and a 3 year old girl. A group like this wouldn't be too hard to place except that the middle boy is HIV+. Shortly after the children arrived at Layla I began getting messages from the volunteers talking about what wonderful children these are. The boy with HIV issues had to be moved to AHOPE. The kids were able to see each other once a week but obviously missed each other. We could have placed the two but decided to wait awhile to see if we could find a family for the three. Sure enough, a family in Illinois heard about them. They hadn't expected to adopt three kids at once and needed financial help which was granted through the GRACE Fund. I am happy to say that these three kids will be raised together and we are grateful to those who have financially supported the GRACE Fund as well as thrilled that this family is moving ahead to adopt these three.

There is more news, but I am out of space. Please check our web site, the What's Happening section, to keep current on AAI developments.

Best wishes and thank you all for your encouragement and support.  
Merrily and Ted