

# Open Arms Open Minds



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## Perspectives on.... Our 1,400th Placement

By Nicole and Aran



*"All Quiet on the Western Slope" ...at least temporarily*

Keep the faith! We can't count how many times we were told that. After a heart breaking experience with a baby girl earlier in the fall, however; we were feeling more like pragmatists than idealists. Our thoughts had turned inwards and ultimately we realized that the true direction of healing was in looking forward, not back. Of course that is easier said than done. Our previous experience had left us with a room full of baby girl memories, clothes and miscellaneous stuff that eventually needed to be dealt with. November 11<sup>th</sup>, Armistice Day, seemed like as good a day as any. Nicole got down to the business of the actual unpacking. The question immediately arose as to what to do with all the little girl clothes we had accrued over the past months; should we store them away out-of-sight, or just re-hang them in the closet? After all we didn't know if our baby was going to be a boy or a girl. In the spirit of positive thinking, we decided to just wash them and put them right back in the closet. It took a couple of hours, but at last everything was unpacked, cleaned and put away. The closet looked clean and complete; ready for whatever was to come next. We were ready to be back on "the list" and to continue our vigil for the baby we had been waiting for. What would it be, another month or two? We could certainly handle that. Armistice Day, is symbolic in that it was the day that the guns fell silent on the Western Front of Europe during World War I. Somehow it was fitting that on that day, we would finally find peace and introspection regarding our situation. We were truly good to go.

Would you believe that two hours after our catharsis on November 11<sup>th</sup> we got the call? THE CALL. It came about 3:30 in the afternoon. I was in the back yard working out some aggressions on a pile of fire wood when Nicole poked her head out the door and yelled that Leslie was on the phone! We soon found out that a young woman had chosen us as the adoptive family for her newborn child. The little girl was born on October 30<sup>th</sup> and was now 2 weeks old. Her name was Lilja; so much information filtered down to these few incredible facts. This was Wednesday and by Saturday we were to go to Denver to meet the birth mother and ultimately to meet Lilja. The next two days went by very quickly and we were on our way to Denver.

Meeting the birth mother was really incredible. There couldn't have been three more nervous people in the city that morning, but that all disappeared quickly as we found many things in common to talk about. Lilja's birth mother was incredibly smart, thoughtful and beautiful. After all the talk, there comes a moment in these meetings when everybody has to look at each other and decide if there is a match between the birth mother and the adoptive family. We all agreed that we matched! The next step was to go meet Lilja at Cradle Care.

We knew the cradle care family from our previous month in the Denver area so we were very comfortable going to the house and seeing Diane, Kelly and their boys. We were greeted like old family walking into the house! There was a car seat on the table with a blanket over the top of it, but we weren't allowed to peak just yet. Diane had us gather close around the seat before she lifted up the blanket..."one...two.....three" and up came the blanket! Looking at us from the car seat was tiny, dark haired, dark eyed Lilja Gabrielle. The moment we had her in our arms we knew this was our little one!!! The next day was the placement ceremony. It was very intimate, emotional and so thoughtfully done. We still look at our three-wick candle which reminds us of the bond we have formed with Lilja's birth mother. It has been three months since we brought Lilja home, and they have been the most amazing months of our lives. It is incredible to see her smile that toothless smile the moment she wakes up or nestle in your arms to go to sleep. She is still tiny, but is turning into a little firecracker. So our lives changed at the ring of a phone on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

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**THANK  
YOU  
TO ALL OF  
OUR  
VOLUNTEERS,  
DONORS AND  
BOARD  
MEMBERS!**

# DIRECTOR'S PEN

by Carol Holliday Lawson, Executive Director



As the days get longer and warmer, our thoughts jump to Spring – to the new buds on shrubs, to the beginnings of flowering plants, and to the hope that springs eternal from the start of a new year and new cycle. Last year was a difficult year in many ways, and yet we were able to place 37 children into new families. So far this year, we have placed 12, which is a very promising start filled with hopeful expectations for this to continue. Our intensive outreach, spearheaded by Jeanette Wotkyns, appears to be having an impact. We will not slow down this process of reaching out into the community and maintaining professional relationships with our colleagues in referral agencies.

Adoption has been highlighted again in the media following the tragedies in Haiti. Some of the exposure was positive, illustrating the commitment of the Haitian government and US Immigration to work together to speed up the process for the children already referred to families in the US. Many of those children came to Colorado and were welcomed by families, their adoption agencies and the State Department of Human Services. The tragedy also showed the darker side of the adoption process with groups going to Haiti to “rescue” the children in the name of adoption. There are thousands of orphans in Haiti, some of whom will be available for adoption. For anyone considering this option, ensure you work with an accredited agency with an ethical program. It is the only way to protect the children in the long term.

As you will see elsewhere in the newsletter, the agency is planning two fundraisers this year. One will be our annual golf tournament, which this year will be at the Pinery in Parker. It is a beautiful, private club with a brand new clubhouse and wonderful facilities. I would like as many of you to play, sponsor a team and/or get your company to sponsor the tournament. In October we will have our bi-annual Gala at the Wildlife Experience. Again, it would be lovely to see as many of you there as possible. It will be a wonderful evening. More information will follow, but please put October 23<sup>rd</sup> in your calendar!

Carol Holliday Lawson

## WE NEED YOU!

Would you, or someone you know, be interested in being a member of the Adoption Options' Board of Directors?

If so, we would love to hear from you!

The Board of Directors plays a vital role in the shaping the future for the agency and provides crucial support and fundraising efforts.

There are required meetings once a month and the average time commitment is approximately 3-5 hours a month.

**Please contact  
Carol Lawson  
(303) 695-1601 to  
find out more  
information.**



## BETTY CLARKE

*“...To appreciate beauty, to find the best in others, to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child or a garden patch...to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded.” ~Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Betty Clarke, whom we are very sad to say we recently lost, certainly was a successful human being.

She touched so many people's lives and leaves a legacy of compassionate service and dedication to helping others.

We would like to take a moment to celebrate Betty's life and express our gratitude for the impact she had on Adoption Options.

Betty and her husband Steve served on Adoption Options' first Board of Directors. They played a pivotal role in determining the direction of the agency, and shaped the future of the organization. It is no stretch to say that Adoption Options is what it is today thanks, in large part, to the vision, commitment and efforts of Steve and Betty Clarke.

Betty Clarke will be truly missed, yet she will live on through her effect on the agency and, in turn, on every birth parent we counsel, every child we place and every adoptive family we support.

There is no telling just how many lives have breathed easier because Betty Clarke lived.



## SHARING THE ADOPTION STORY

When a child is placed in a new family, the adoption journey starts, it doesn't end—you haven't reached your destination. You have started a whole new journey with new roles, new dreams, new expectations and new realities. For new adoptive parents, this will mean questions and curiosity from everyone—family, friends and strangers. Although it can be difficult, please don't feel drawn into telling them the private information that belongs to your child and to you only. A child's adoption story belongs to him or her and is something that should be shared with them before sharing with others. It is not something that should be kept a secret to be ashamed of, but to be understood, accepted and discussed honestly.

During education classes, we share tools, hints and advice about talking to your child in a positive, embracing, caring and honest way about being adopted. There is an expectation and assumption that our families will feel comfortable doing this, and most families do. However, over the years, we have occasionally learned of a person placed for adoption who was not told of his or her adoption story until adulthood. These individuals struggle with the magnitude of this new information and all of the emotions, questions and confusion that it brings up. Recently, we had a person who works in our office building come in to ask for resources on behalf of one of her adult clients who had just found out that she was adopted. She was so upset and in shock that she was unable to come in to talk to us herself about where to seek help with overcoming her pain and sorting out her emotions.

In adoption, there is a delicate balance between sharing and withholding information. While we must keep our children's adoption stories private, it is only by sharing the full details of this story with them that our children are empowered to make their own decisions.

Please do not underestimate the importance of honesty, openness and trust in your relationship with your child, especially when it comes to your child's adoption story!

## GOLF TOURNAMENT

**AUGUST 9, 2010**  
**THE PINERY COUNTRY CLUB**  
New venue, new month, new event—  
exciting!!  
**Please join us!**

## PICNIC

**AUGUST 28, 2010**  
**JEFFERSON COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS**  
11am—2pm  
Food, Face Painting and Clown  
Entertainment!  
**Hope you can make it!**

## CARS FOR CHARITY

Cars for Charity is a non-profit vehicle donation program serving Colorado charities. Donate a car, truck, motorcycle, boat, or even recreational vehicle, and you can designate 100% of the net proceeds to Adoption Options! It is easier than repairing or selling your vehicle! As long as the vehicle has a clear title, you can donate it—running or not! There is no tow charge, title processing is free, and you receive a receipt for your tax deductible gift (please contact the IRS or your tax advisor for details regarding this tax deduction).

**CALL (303) 835-GIVE**  
**Or submit your donation**  
**online at:**  
**[www.carsforcharity.net](http://www.carsforcharity.net)**



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Our Biennial Fundraising Gala will be held on October 23rd at the Wildlife Experience this year!

### **A CALL FOR AUCTION ITEMS**

We are interested in any items that could be used in the silent and live auctions at this event. If you, or anyone you know, might have a service, event tickets, or any items they would be willing to donate to help raise money for Adoption Options, we would be so grateful!

**Please call Carol Lawson**  
**at (303) 695-1601**  
**for more information.**

## THE STAFF AT ADOPTION OPTIONS



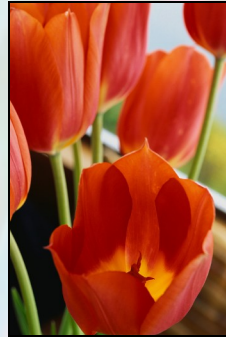
## COMINGS AND GOINGS

The past year has brought quite a few changes to the staff of Adoption Options!

First, in April of 2009, our Placement Supervisor, Adrienne Elliott, left the agency when a career opportunity at the University of Denver became available to her—an offer that she could not turn down. In July, Allison Villarreal, one of our Birthparent Counselors, and Amanda Schaad, one of our contract caseworkers, left the agency when they each had their first baby. In August, Lori Devlyn, one of our Adoptive Family Caseworkers, had to leave the agency when her husband was transferred out of state. Then, in September, Erin Sullivan, our Legal Liaison and Volunteer Coordinator, decided to move on to new opportunities. Finally, in February of this year, our receptionist, Cecilia McMurray, was offered a position with the staff of the church she attends.

We truly miss each and every one of them, and want nothing but the best for them all in their new careers. We are happy to see our friends and former co-workers begin a new chapter in their lives.

With some employees leaving, we have, of course, welcomed new staff members: three new employees came aboard this year! Megan Cavanagh is our new receptionist, Kathie Lombardie is helping us to scan documents and files, Kathryn Beals (a veteran of Adoption Options, having done contract work for us in the past), has joined the staff in the office as a Birthparent Counselor and Adoptive Family Caseworker. We look forward to getting to know our new coworkers and we hope you will join us in offering them a very warm welcome!



**DEX**<sup>™</sup>

**Many thanks to DEX for its wonderful sponsorship and on-going support.**



[www.adoption-options.com](http://www.adoption-options.com)

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