

insider

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Bethany Christian Services
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*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;
the old has gone, the new has come!*

2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV

Bethany's

By Janna Vandiver

A New Creation

The foundation for a new creation was laid in November 2006 during a meeting at the Bethany Christian Services office in Little Rock. That day, Kim Grissom met with an adoption specialist to discuss pursuing an international special needs adoption. Kim, mother to a thirteen-year-old daughter, Lexi, had the desire to expand her family. She was interested in a pre-identified special needs child from Hong Kong.

Across the globe in Hong Kong, a new beginning was on the horizon for a young girl. Po Yuk Chu had been identified as an international adoptable child and was featured on Bethany's website. Kim had identified Po as the child she was seeking to adopt before approaching Bethany.

Po was a six-year-old girl who had lived in an orphanage for the majority of her life but had recently been placed in a foster home. Po was diagnosed with microcephaly, and she was visibly malnourished and underweight. After learning about Po and her special needs, Kim felt led to adopt her. Kim entered the adoption process with Po in her heart.

Lexi, Kim's adopted daughter who has Down syndrome, hearing loss, and celiac disease, joined Kim's family shortly after birth. Lexi has thrived in Kim's home and Kim's heart for working with special needs children has grown through her experiences as Lexi's mother. Kim is educated and trained as an elementary school teacher and has worked in that capacity for 22 years.

With her training in education and experience as Lexi's mother, Kim felt she could nurture Po to develop to her full potential. Kim also knew she could provide a stable, loving home, and Lexi would experience the joy of having a sibling.

Kim recalls that when she and Lexi would sit at the kitchen table to eat, "it felt like someone was missing." Now, as they sit around the table, the void is filled as they are a family of three. God called Kim to adopt Po, and Kim responded.

Po had expressed her desire to be called Polly (the English equivalent of Po) to her foster family in Hong Kong. On September 15, 2007, Polly arrived in the United States with a huge smile on her face and had an instant connection with Kim.

Polly's social worker, Connie, created several life books that included pictures from her birthday parties, pictures of her siblings, and many other memories of her life in Hong Kong. These would not only provide Kim with a glimpse into Polly's life but Polly would cherish these photographs, which document her early life in Hong Kong.

Today, Polly is a seven-year-old girl attending kindergarten and is already blossoming into a bright, active, happy child. She is quickly learning the English language and is able to read and speak all of her sight words assigned at school.

Upon arriving at Kim's home, Polly was enthralled with her comfortable bed, and Kim would find her snuggled under her covers in the middle of the day enjoying her cozy sheets and blankets. Kim feels that Polly would say that she loves her bed the most.

Polly attends school where Kim teaches and, at the end of the day, Polly runs down the hall, jumps into Kim's arms, and gives her mother kisses and hugs. Lexi is now a proud, big sister and points to Polly as an introduction when meeting new people. The girls enjoy playing together for hours, and Lexi has been happy to share her toys with her younger sister.

The seed for Kim's gift with special needs children was planted long ago. Kim remembers

being in church with her mother and noticing children with Down syndrome. While sitting in the pew, she looked up at her mom and said, "I want a baby like that someday."

At the time, she was enamored by their sweet faces and innocence, and Kim continues to echo those feelings today about both of her daughters. She admits that adding a third person has increased the loads of laundry, but it has also added the smiling face of a young girl with a bright future.

Adoption has allowed a new creation in Kim Grissom's family, and she has been blessed by her



Kim and Polly

international adoption experience. As a single woman, she has been given the opportunity to parent, and her openness to special needs children gave her the chance to use her gifts as a mother.

Kim encourages others interested in adoption to consider special needs children. "This experience has been humbling for me and highlights the many things we take for granted." According to Kim, Polly cherishes her soft, warm bed at night, food on the table, and most of all, the love from her forever family.

If you are interested in having a child warm your heart and are considering adoption please contact us at 501.664.5729 for more information.

Bethany announces new board presidents for the branch office and for the northwest satellite office.



Brent Medders has served on the board since August 2005. Brent became familiar with Bethany when he and his wife, Laura, adopted their daughter, Lucy, through Bethany in 2004. Brent is known for his generous giving nature. Welcome, Brent, as our new board president!



Jason Owens joined the satellite board in Fayetteville in August 2006. Jason and his wife, Jenny, are second-generation Bethany supporters. Jason is known for his energy and eagerness to make a difference.

We are grateful for the willingness of both of these godly men to assume the role of president over their respective boards and are excited to see where their leadership takes Bethany of Arkansas in the coming months!

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Lexi and Polly



Janna Vandiver, LCSW

We are pleased to introduce you to Janna Vandiver, LCSW, who joined the Little Rock staff on September 4, 2007, as adoption specialist. Janna is responsible for assisting adoptive families through the education, preparation, and assessment process of pre-adoption. Additionally, Janna provides post-placement adoption services. Her caseload covers domestic, international, embryo, and special needs adoptions. We are thrilled to have Janna as part of the Arkansas team.