



Every Life a Promise

Bethany Christian Services- Nashville, 220 Athens Way, Suite 405, Nashville, Tennessee 37228, (615)242-0909

Recent Adoptions

I apologize for not including these two families in the list of 2006 placements:

Mark and Elizabeth Bentle received Hope Elizabeth on November 13, 2006.

Bryan and Stacy Huddleston took Alexis home on December 23, 2006.

Now for 2007! In addition to the Mays and Roycrofts receiving their babies in January, Trent and Hastings Benitone received Kaleigh Jane on January 26.

In February, Rod and Joy Fletcher received Jaclyn Marie on the 5th and John and Corinne Opalinski received John Paul on the 21st.

On March 23, Curtis and April DuBois received Nathan Curtis.

Nathan and Amber West received twins, Cale Benjamin and Brynn Christine, on April 2.

Upcoming Events

- May 14 Transracial Playgroup at the Bethany office from 6:30-7:30pm.
- May 15 IAC Birthparent Support Group Meeting at the Bethany office from 6-7:30pm. (Open to all birthparents, friends, and family).
- May 21 Domestic Adoption Support Group at Woodmont Hills Church of Christ, East Hall, Room 201, at 6:30pm.
- May 24 Adoption Information Meeting (Domestic, International and Embryo Adoption), from 6 - 8:30pm. Location to be announced.

Save the Date! *The 2007 New Friends Dinner will be on November 13, 2007.*

Please let us know if you'd like to help with this event!

From the Director

I must apologize for the delay in getting out a newsletter. There has been so much going on that we didn't pull one together for a couple of months. We will try to do better! It is so encouraging to me to hear from you that you enjoy the newsletter. I would like to encourage you to continue to stay involved with Bethany. There are so many ways to volunteer - the mentoring program, food for birth mothers, helping with our fund-raising event, office help...the list can go on and on. One way that I'd like for you to consider is our Champions for Children program. When we started the program a couple of years ago we were calling it a church liaison program. Our national office has formalized the program, renamed it "Champions for Children", and is being a great support. This program is designed to help us reach out into the community to people who need our services. I hope that you are willing to be a Champion for Children in your church and community. Please let me know if you have questions. Thank you for your involvement with Bethany!

From Carolyn

The time for waiting families can be a great time of gathering information and becoming educated about parenting and relationship with baby before that precious baby actually arrives. And the internet is a readily available resource. The following excerpt is from a web site called **Invest in Kids**.

- **Babies are born with the need to form close relationships with caring and responsive adults** - what childhood experts call "attachments." If children don't have the opportunity to develop close, uninterrupted attachments with nurturing adults during the early years, young children will find it more difficult to learn, to become confident and to trust others.
- **Babies can form consistent attachments with the people who are around them most.** These few important relationships create a sense in your child of what kind of world this is and what her place is in it.
- **A secure attachment to caring adults helps your child learn to adapt to circumstances more easily, and to overcome difficult situations**

throughout his life. This kind of attachment helps your child to believe the world is a friendly and safe place. Having a parent or caregiver who learns to understand and respond to a baby's signals, such as picking baby up and comforting him when crying, will help to form a secure, healthy attachment.

- **Relax, and don't worry about making mistakes.** It will take some time for you to learn what your baby is trying to communicate. All parents learn by trial and error. As long as your baby knows she can count on you most of the time, she'll be amazingly flexible and forgiving.
- **Here are some ways to build a warm relationship with your child:** Hold your child close, talk warmly about what you or your child is doing, and provide hugs and kisses. Try singing or telling a story to your child - whatever songs or stories you like. Be yourself and your baby will come to love it. Try playing some games like peek-a-boo or 'I'm going to get you.'

From Lisa

This month, I have reviewed a book entitled The Whole Adoption Book, by Jayne E. Schooler. This book gives realistic advice for building a healthy adoptive family. I enjoyed previewing it and each section was helpful. The book has four parts which are as follows:

- Part One – Adoption: A labor of the heart
- Part Two - When a child comes home
- Part Three – Communicating about adoption
- Part Four – Growing up adopted

Each part has subtopics that include, but are not limited to:

- Talking to children about adoption: When and how
- Attachment: How to develop the crucial bond
- Searching for a past: Why adopted children seek their roots and how parents can respond
- What builds healthy adoptive families? Ten critical success factors

I would recommend this book as a great read for families considering adoption, as well as families that have completed the process.

From Amanda

It is such a privilege to work with each family that comes through Bethany Christian Services. Carolyn and I are the domestic adoption team and we welcome any questions you may have. On your journey to adopting the baby the Lord has predetermined to be a part of your family, please consider how He may want to teach you during this waiting

time. Our Bethany office has shelves of books for your reading preparation. Please stop by during the weekday and check-out a book.

Here are just some of the books we have available to you:

A Treasury of Adoption Miracles, by Kingsbury
Adoptees Come of Age, by Nydam
Adoption & Spirituality, by Rudnick Jr.
Adoption is a Family Affair, by Johnston
After the Adoption, by Hormann
Breastfeeding the Adopted Baby, by Peterson
Family Bonds: Adoption and the Politics of Parenting, by Bartholet
How it Feels to be Adopted, by Kremenz
How to Adopt a Child, by Crain & Duffy
Successful Adoption: A Guide for Christian Families, by Gillespie
The Post Adoption Blues, by Foli & Thompson
The Spirit of Open Adoption, by Gritter
Raising Adopted Children, by Melina

From Sheryl

You may have heard that Bethany Christian Services is now offering embryo donation and adoption services. This is a new option for Bethany clients, but not one that is well understood by the general public. Through the use of *in vitro fertilization* (IVF), many couples have been blessed with the joy of giving birth to a child. Along with that joy, there may come a dilemma - extra frozen embryos that the couple no longer intends to use.

In order to give their embryos the best chance of living a full life, couples with extra embryos are often willing to donate them to couples suffering from infertility. By means of a contract the donors transfer full responsibility for the embryos to the adopting couple. Then, a trained physician will thaw a number of the embryos and transfer them to the womb of the intended mother. Hopefully, this will result in a successful pregnancy and healthy birth. Any child born in this manner becomes the legal son or daughter of the adopting couple who gives birth.

What are some of the pros and cons of embryo adoption for the adoptive couple? Some advantages are the opportunity to give embryos life, the pregnancy experience including in-utero bonding with the child, control of the pre-natal environment, participation in the choice of the genetic family, possibility of multiples, and no finalization process required by law. The cons are that the embryos may not survive thawing process, a pregnancy may not result, multiples may result (may be a pro or con so it is included in both lists), and the pregnancy may not be carried to term.

Bethany is excited to offer this opportunity to couples seeking to expand their family through adoption. We are happy to be a resource to you and answer any questions you may have regarding this program.

From Chris

Many of our families will or have adopted children internationally that are coming from orphanages. This presents unique challenges as a family begins to help their child transition from orphanage life to family life. Here are some excerpts from a good article that addresses this issue.

Post-institutionalized children do best in a highly structured environment. By starting out with a highly organized home life; this will minimize regressive behavior in the child.

Another important situation is over stimulation. Where not enough love is definitely in the detriment of the child's emotional health, too much love right away can lead to emotional turmoil and stress. Post institutionalized children have a limited ability to auto regulate themselves or their behavior. Activities which can be viewed as a normal family routine (example: a trip to the mall, Toys R' Us or Disneyland) can lead to total decompensation and meltdown in a internationally adopted child, especially during the first six months post placement.

It is imperative during the first few months to maximize parent child interactions. This can be done by reading, holding, and playing with the child. Constant reassurance that the parent will always be there must be made

Unfortunately, many children exhibit bizarre behaviors such as rocking, and head banging. These behaviors are self stimulating and soothing activities that help the child to auto regulate himself. These behaviors may appear disturbing to the parents, but as long as they do not pose a safety issue to the child, parents should learn to tolerate them. Most of these behaviors will diminish what time but may reemerge only when the child is tired or stressed.

From Leslie

This month, I would like to share my review of Patricia Roles book, [Saying Goodbye to a Baby](#). Patricia Roles is birthmother who relinquished her child for adoption. She also has her master's degree in social work. Her background includes experience in both adult and child psychiatry, with emotionally disturbed children and in private practice with adolescents. As of 1989, when the book was published, Patricia Roles was working with teenage birthparents and conducting workshops on teenage pregnancy and adoption. In her book, Volume 1-The Birthparent's Guide to Loss and Grief in Adoption, Patricia Roles takes you through the whole process of choosing adoption. She begins with exploring adoption and the routes to take and ends with living with your decision. She does an excellent job at walking you through the process, not only recommending how to get the help you will need, but provides facts about

the pregnancy and birth experience and discusses all the emotional reactions a birthmother will experience before, during and after her decision for adoption. She is also very candid about her own experiences, which gives the book a very personal touch. This book is an excellent resource for a birthmother who is trying to make the decision on whether adoption is the right choice for her, or for someone who has made the decision and is walking through the process.

Board of Directors

Here are the members of our 2007 Board of Directors:

Bob Lawhon, Board Chair
Ron Carter
Jamie Clary
Tim Coomer
Kim Fredrickson
Lance Green
Erin McDuffie
Matt Price
Jill Robinson
Clint Russell
Dave Simmerman

Infertility Support Group

Bethany is preparing to begin the next six-week infertility support and educational group. The group will address many issues including how infertility affects marriage, friendships, spirituality, and finances. The group also investigates ethical issues that can arise during treatment. The cost is \$10 per session (for couples or individuals) and meetings will be held each Tuesday night from 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm at the Bethany office located at 220 Athens Way, Suite 405 in Nashville. If you are interested, please email sfindley@bethany.org or call the office for dates.

Birthmother Mentoring Program

Many of you may know that we have a Birthmother Mentoring Program. The program is up and running and we are now in need of more volunteers! We are looking for Christian women ages 21 and older who have a flexible schedule during the day to help with practical needs of birthmothers including, but not limited to, transportation to prenatal appointments. This program is designed for mentors to develop a one-on-one relationship with a woman in a crisis pregnancy to provide support, encouragement, and friendship. Please contact Sheryl in our office for more information. Please note that women who are in our pool of waiting families for domestic adoption are not eligible as to avoid any possible conflict of interest.

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