

Friends of Adoption

Newsletter of Christian Family Adoptions · Winter 2012



Until Every Orphan Has A Home: CFA Annual Adoption Awareness Event

Keynote speaker, Russ Brechbiel

Christian Family Adoptions (CFA) welcomed over 350 people at our annual Adoption Awareness and Celebration Event on October 14, 2011. It was a beautiful display of families drawn together for a common cause. Families made up of many cultures and from every walk of life united for the single purpose of promoting and supporting adoption... until every orphan has a home.

As guests entered the building, they were met by a large group of enthusiastic teens who volunteered to make everyone feel at home. Also greeting visitors in the lobby was the Heart Gallery of Hope, a photo display reminding us to pray for children who are waiting to be united with their forever families. The mission of the Heart Gallery of Hope is to find a safe and permanent home for every waiting child. Our CFA office has received several requests from individuals and organizations that would like to host our traveling display in their venue. If you are interested in partnering with us to help foster children find their Forever Families by displaying these special photos in your church or other social setting, please contact our office or Kara at kara@christianfamilyadoptions.org.

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The evening's program started with powerful, inspirational music, compliments of Kristin Kirkland and her band. Kristin is a Portland-area worship leader who hosts an annual event titled "Simply a Night of Worship", which benefits local area nonprofit organizations, such as the Pregnancy Resource Center.

Accompanied by his wife, Lisa, and six of his eight children, keynote speaker Russ Brechbiel shared the captivating chronicle of how adoption has changed him, as well as each member of his family. Russ and Lisa Brechbiel have been married for 20 years and are parents to Sarynn (19), Nick (17), Halle (16), Xander (14), Mattie (12), Noelle (11), Zach (8) and Josh (5). Through amazing photos and touching stories, Russ recounted the addition of each child to their lives - two sons by birth, four daughters by adoption from India, and two sons by adoption from Uganda - and wove a beautiful tapestry of acceptance, redemption and unconditional love. Prior to the October event, all



David Duncan (left) and Ken Cooper (right)

10 Brechbiels were featured on AM Northwest. Go to this website to watch the segment, see the entire clan and hear more of their amazing family-building saga: <http://www.katu.com/amnw/segments/130887248.html>

Next on the action-packed agenda was CFA's Executive Director, Rebecca Sexton, who had the honor of presenting three service awards, which are given in the name of the agency's founder, LeEllen Bradshaw. The recognition is granted to individuals who have selflessly donated their time,

abilities and resources to support CFA's mission. This year's recipients were Jerry Bowen of WebNation, Andrew Cooper of Coopertrail Website Design, and David Duncan of Duncan Law Office. We are grateful for their expert assistance and their servants' hearts.

Among the array of engaging speakers was Ted Willard, one of the founders of Orphan Corps, a nonprofit organization devoted to providing support and training for future or current adoptive families. We also heard from Shelby, a teen who has been touched by the stories of children in foster care, as she shared ideas for helping waiting children find permanent homes.

Tears and laughter continued to flow when Benjamin, an adoptive dad, told the tale of how he and his wife were inspired at the 2010 Adoption Awareness event and recently welcomed a sibling group of three into their home and family. You can enjoy their full story, which is told on page 8 of this newsletter.

While the adults were enjoying moving messages and delicious desserts, the "Fired-Up" youth discipleship group provided a fun experience for our youngest guests. As one pleased parent noted, "It was a wonderful evening. We brought our 2 boys, age 3 and 5, and the kids in the child care did a super job of keeping them entertained. Bravo to those child care workers."

The 2011 Adoption Awareness and Celebration event was an unforgettable evening, made possible by those mentioned above, as well as countless other friends and encouragers. We are thankful to our Heavenly Father for his provision through those who share our goal. It is a privilege to partner with all of our supporters on behalf of children "until every orphan has a home." ♥

"If anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones, ... he will certainly not lose his reward."

- Jesus (Mark 10:42)

James 1:27 Penetrated My Heart

by Lois, an adoptive mother



*Pictured left to right: Mark and Lois with their children
Evan, Elizabeth, Andrew and Nikita*

James 1:27: Most Christians can quote this verse with their eyes closed, that pure religion is caring for widows and orphans. I am embarrassed to say that it took nearly 50 years to penetrate my heart to the point of really doing something for one of those orphans.

Our adoption adventure began when our close friends hosted a 15-year-old boy from Ukraine during July of 2010. They had toddlers, we had teenagers; it was natural to invite Nikita over to play with our son. Through games of basketball, soccer and Marco Polo in the pool, they discovered you don't have to speak the same language to become friends. Somewhere in there both my husband and I found ourselves daydreaming about bringing Nik into our family—which my husband considered a real sign from God, since I am not adventurous by nature! When we approached our children about the idea, they amazed us with their wisdom and big hearts.

The first hurdle of adopting internationally was the cost: We were looking at approximately \$25,000 to bring Nikita home. However, over the next five months we watched in awe as a miracle unfolded: Just as the Lord had opened our hearts, He now opened the storehouses of heaven and funded

something way beyond our means. Aside from asking one friend to organize a potato bar fundraiser, we never approached anyone for money; people just gave. Friends in our church, community and extended family kept surprising us with donations of all sizes, and by February we had the entire amount needed, plus a recommended cushion in case there were any delays during our trip.

A second obstacle that was always lurking like a dark theme in a symphony was Nikita's upcoming birthday - because our country will not allow a foreign adoption past the age of 16. Navigating the complexities of USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services) seemed pretty overwhelming until we received the aid of Senator Wyden's immigration assistant, who helped us complete the process in time to meet the deadline and keep our hope alive.

In the meantime, we kept in touch with Nik through the wonders of modern technology (Skype) and good old fashioned snail mail, as well as a special Christmas visit - his hosting fees were paid

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by donors so he was able to spend the holiday with us. During those four weeks we began the process of bonding as a family, and though we were so thankful for the time, it was miserable putting him back on the plane in January! We had to wait until March to receive the invitation by the State Department of Adoptions in Ukraine to come for an appointment and start the process of making Nikita officially our son.

We spent one month in Ukraine, and were so thankful for the requirement that both parents come and spend time in-country in order to adopt one of their children. It was such valuable time experiencing the sights, sounds, tastes and, most of all, the people that had made up the world of

our son. We were able to gain helpful insights from his dorm moms (as well as thank them for what they had given him), meet his friends and better understand his world. But it has taken the last seven months of living together day-by-day, experiencing the highs of soccer goals, the lows of disobedience, and all the mundane in between, to really make us feel like a family - not just in name, but in the heart.

Back before James 1:27 penetrated my heart, I used to wonder about blended families, whether parents could love their adopted children as much as their biological kids. I am thankful to now be in the position to report that they absolutely can—and do!! ♥

Book Review

Attaching in Adoption: Practical Tools for Today's Parents by Deborah Gray, 2002

Reviewed by Cathy Tuma, CFA Case Worker



Cathy Tuma

Having worked with hundreds of adoptive families over the past fifteen years, the book I return to again and again for inspiration and practical tools and techniques is Deborah Gray's, Attaching in Adoption: Practical Tools for Today's Parents. Attachment is a topic of concern for

many adoptive parents. Deborah begins the book by defining attachment as a trusting and secure relationship formed over time and experience. She describes normal and healthy attachment and explains how trust forms through the attachment cycle. Deborah describes secure attachment and various forms of insecure attachment, helping adoptive parents make sense of their child's anxious, clingy, avoidant or overly friendly (to strangers) behaviors. She explains why children form trauma bonds to parents who may have abused them in the past and looks at the role of grief and traumatic loss in the child's life.

This book discusses emotional development and attachment based on the emotional age, and not the chronological age, of the child. Understanding your child's emotional age is helpful, as a traumatized child often functions at a year or two (or more) less than her actual age. Deborah then takes the reader through seven attachment phases. Particularly helpful is a checklist for emotional tasks related to each phase, techniques to promote attachment in each phase, children's reactions to being moved to a new home in particular phases and vignettes of children in each of the various phases. Deborah offers parenting advice to help calm an anxious child or avoid an impending meltdown, and she has a wide array of ideas for discipline. She looks at re-balancing the family after a placement, assessing and meeting the needs of siblings and gives tools for parent self-care.

Deborah Gray offers helpful, practical advice with a great deal of sensitivity to traumatized children. Like me, you may find yourself returning to this book again and again, to find the inspiration to help your child heal emotionally and develop healthy, secure attachments. ♥

CFA Profile: A Conversation with Pete and Kristine Aldrich, CFA Board Members



The Aldrich Family

*Back row: Pete and James; middle row : Joshua, Rachel,
Kristine and Sarah; front row: Mark and Anna*

1. Pete and Kristine, we know you're parents of six children and two of them, Anna and Joshua, were adopted from China. How did you first become interested in adoption?

We had four children before adopting Anna and Joshua. Like many people, we considered adoption over the years and thought it might be a good idea "someday". The thought of orphaned children in the world tugged at our hearts, but it didn't seem like a realistic thing for us to pursue. It wasn't until God put a specific child in front of us, and we felt He specifically asked us why we couldn't be her family, that we made the decision to take what felt like a huge leap of faith.

2. How did Anna and Joshua join your family, and how did your faith influence your adoption journey?

My husband and daughter had been attending a youth group and one evening Pete (my husband)

was unable to go so I (Kristine) went in his place. One of the girls shared a prayer request for a little girl in China who needed a family. As I prayed along with everyone else, my heart raced and I felt led to learn more about her. On the drive home I rationalized all the practical reasons why we couldn't possibly adopt now, the most significant being a lack of funds. However, God reminded me that we had an equity credit line set aside to build a pole barn, since we had recently moved to a home without a garage. I started imagining myself talking to God and explaining that we couldn't adopt because we needed to park our cars indoors for the winter.

I chose to turn it over to my very practical husband - I was sure he had many more reasons why we couldn't adopt. Instead, he said we should ask the adoption agency for more information about the little girl. After a family meeting, we decided to keep moving forward and let God be the one to shut the door.

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Later that evening, I saw that my daughter had enlarged the little girl's photo on my computer. I stared at the picture wondering how I could say "yes" but also knowing I couldn't say "no". I asked God for clarity. At that moment, a song started playing from a new CD I had popped in a while earlier. Steven Curtis Chapman's lyrics spoke to me: "I saw the face of Jesus in a little orphan girl, she was standing in a corner, on the other side of the world, and I heard the voice of Jesus gently whisper to my heart, didn't you say you wanted to know me, well here I am and there you are, what now, what will you do now that you found me?" I cried. A few minutes later, Pete came in from



*Pictured in back: Kristine and Sarah
Front: Joshua, Anna & Mark*

working on the pole barn project. When he heard the song and what had happened, he said, "Well, I guess we're getting a little girl." That was Anna.

Five months after Anna came home, we were waiting to tell our story at an adoption information meeting and using a photo album to keep Anna occupied. Some of the pictures were from her orphanage. Pete pointed and said, "Did you ever notice the boy in this picture? His arms look just like Anna's." They both have a rare disorder affecting the muscles and joints. We had never considered adopting an older boy (he looked to be a couple years older than Anna, close to the age of our youngest son) and we weren't in a position to

consider another expensive adoption.

As with Anna, I couldn't get this child out of my thoughts. I prayed for him for many months. One evening, I was taking my husband's place at youth group again when a friend directed me to an adoption agency website. She had just received a referral of a girl in Ethiopia and her child's picture was on the website. That evening, when I searched for the photo, I decided to look at the agency's Chinese waiting children, and there was the boy from Anna's orphanage, listed for adoption. Many more miracles later, and three years after bringing Anna home, Joshua joined our family.

3. How did your older children respond to the adoption of Anna and Joshua?

The potential effects on our other children were big considerations in both adoptions. However, we all felt strongly that God had orchestrated too many miracles for us to doubt He had a good purpose. All of our children have developed a strong heart for orphans and a desire to help others. We think it has helped them to be more other-focused and all of them will use our adoption stories as examples of miracles that have built their faith.

4. What led you to join the CFA board of directors?

We heard about the prayer request for Anna in between the time we had accepted an invitation to a CFA event and when we actually attended the event. As a result, that evening had a great impact on both of us and our two older daughters that attended. We were very drawn to a ministry that could have an impact on the many children close to home that also need families. Over the next several years, we continued to attend events and invite guests. It seemed like a natural ministry fit for our family to join the board.

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5. What advice would you give to other families who might be considering adoption?

If you believe God is calling you to adopt, it is important to consider the practical implications, but don't let that stop you. Believe that God can and will do miracles to accomplish His purpose. When we found Joshua listed for adoption, we had recently felt God calling us to eliminate debt (the

\$10,000 credit line we still needed to pay off after our previous adoption). We trusted that God could call us to two seemingly opposing things - paying off our debt and pursuing another adoption. God provided every penny we needed - sometimes on the very day we needed it - in unexpected ways, and we had the credit line paid off within a few months of bringing Joshua home. We still don't have a pole barn. It just makes me smile when Anna or Joshua say they wish we had a garage... ♥

Adoption Is A Blessing, An Adventure And A Miracle

by Benjamin, an adoptive father



Pictured with Benjamin and Angela are Benjamin's mom (left), Dave and Eve (back row) and Heaven, Nicolas and Kamea (front row)

Benjamin and Angela, along with their two biological children, Eve (age 6) and Dave (age 4), welcomed three additional children into their family in August and September of 2011 through the state of Oregon's child welfare system. Here is their story, as shared by Benjamin at CHI's 2011 Adoption Awareness and Celebration Event on October 14:

We are in the process of adopting Kamea and Nick-Nick through the SNAC (Special Needs Adoption Coalition) program. They were placed with us in August. We hope to finalize the adoption sometime in 2012. Heaven is a biological sister to Kamea and Nick-Nick and was placed with us in September, about one month after Kamea and Nick-Nick. We are currently foster parents for her. She was a

surprise who came to us when my wife called me at work and asked if I was sitting down. We picked her up a few hours later.

Years ago I got interested in an orphanage in China called Philip Hayden. We supported them for awhile, always got their newsletters, and always were amazed by what God was doing there. There was always talk of adopting some day, possibly from there, but never any plans past talking. Somewhere along the line I became content with never going farther. Strangely enough, the reality of adoption just never occurred to me. I wasn't even sure what I was waiting for.

Then, in October, just one year ago, a friend

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mentioned an upcoming adoption awareness event - it was the 2010 CFA event. Conflicted at the possibility of doing something about what I wanted to do, I somewhat reluctantly ended up at the event with Angela. I think that's when God really got our attention and began to lead us to adopt locally from the foster care system.

The first time I saw Kamea and Nick they were just a couple of cute kids that fit our criteria (siblings 4 and younger). A little on the young side (I wasn't excited about 2 in diapers - let alone 3 - secretly hoping I was done with that stage in life). They had some vague medical issues (a lot of possibilities with little for sure). This took us through a sort of down and up journey. Down in fear and up in faith. We would panic, turn to the Lord, then be fine.

Not knowing what else to do, we began asking questions - a lot of questions. We talked with everyone involved with the kids and sought advice from others. We talked a lot, prayed a lot, fought a little and saw God change us a whole lot.

We learned that we needed to show grace to each other as God helped us work through possible changes to us and our family. We learned to seek wisdom from God and not the world.

Sometimes panic would set in when we couldn't think of any more questions to ask. No more questions meant a decision. Several times I found myself very close to saying 'no', that we couldn't do this, and probably weren't being called to do this. But I could never bring myself to say no. It sort of felt like I would be giving up on God, as well as these kids. I understood that if we weren't the parents God had for these kids, that He had someone else for them. I understand that we are not the hope for these kids - God is. But what if God wants to use imperfect parents like us to show hope to Kamea, Nick-Nick and maybe even Heaven? What if God wants to show His love to me and my family this way? What if we say yes? What will God do? What will we do? This started an adventure with God, not knowing what would

happen, but knowing that He would be there with us.

A few months in, we now find most days are good with an occasional 10 minutes of craziness. Some days are really hard as we struggle with the kids doing the things kids sometimes do - fighting with each other and us. We don't always "feel" love for them. We don't always rely on the Lord and we end up a little stressed out. But eventually God gets our attention and gets us back on track. We've never doubted this is what God has for us but, to be honest, we have sometimes doubted our ability to do this. But then, again, isn't that the point? We can't succeed on our own. We need the Lord's help.

In summary, I've learned adoption is a blessing, an adventure and a miracle. I'm learning that adoption is not about getting an adopted child, but rather getting a new son or daughter. (Or daughters!!) I'm learning that the reason God called us to adopt was not just because he loves these kids, but because He loves us, also. I'm also reminded that the reason God calls us to do anything is because He loves us.

I also want to thank our friends and CFA who have helped us. You guys are a huge part of this, too. Thank you! ♥



Eve and Kamea at the 2011 CFA Adoption Awareness Event.

A Gift Worth Waiting For

by Gretchen, an adoptive mother



Baby Jill

We brought home our second baby, Jill Elise, in August 2011. I can't believe how fast the last few months have gone, and I can hardly remember my life without our beautiful baby girl. I finally feel like I have the family I've always wanted - a husband, two kids (our son, Leo, is two years old), even the dog!

The journey to get to this point has been a mixed bag of challenges, emotions, roadblocks, blessings, disappointments and, finally, miracles.

After some very difficult pregnancy losses my husband and I decided adoption was the route for us. We chose the AAI (African American Infant) program because we wanted to do a domestic adoption and we felt this program was a good fit for our family. Our first "match" call came in early August of 2009. We were told that there was a birth mother in Florida who was expecting a boy on October 25 (2009) and that she had chosen us to adopt him. She already had four other children, two of whom she had placed for adoption. We spoke with her on the phone and she seemed very sweet and intelligent.

We were so excited and started planning to bring a baby home in a couple months. We told everyone about the baby and a lot of people said it was a sure thing if she had already placed two children. For some reason, though, I didn't run out and buy a bunch of boy clothes. We had heard that a lot of birthmothers change their minds and I just wanted to wait a little longer to see how things went.

The week before Labor Day, the agency called and said they couldn't reach the birth mom and they felt it was time for us to move on. I remember the caseworker asking if I wanted some time to grieve before our profile book was shown to anyone else. I told her we had already had enough grief, and the baby boy was not really our baby, anyway - it was the birth mother's baby, and maybe she found a way to raise him herself. Whatever had happened, it was her baby, and it was her choice. I realized that until a baby was physically handed to us, it would not be ours. We could only pray for that baby and the life it would have with someone else.

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Within a few days we got the call about our son. A 26-year-old birth mom in Georgia had two little girls and was expecting a boy on October 25 (the same due date as the first birth mom). Everything worked out and about five weeks later, our son was born. His birth mom made the courageous decision to have us parent her beautiful boy. At that point, I felt like he was our son - his birth mom had made the choice and she was certain it was the right one for her and her baby boy.

When we started the process for our second adoption, I had to remind myself that there could be some disappointments... birthmothers back out all the time, situations change. I had my armor on!

We were told about a teenage birth mom who was expecting a baby at the end of August. There were some things that we felt uncertain about, but we knew that if this baby was meant to be ours, God would make it so. I remember feeling a lot of excitement and anxiety, but I also didn't let myself get too attached to the idea that this would be our baby - the birth mom has every right to change her mind; she has every right to parent her child.

Happily, four days after the baby was born, we got a call that the baby was a girl, and the birth mom had selected us to adopt her. The papers were



Baby Jill and her big brother, Leo

signed, she was leaving the hospital, and we needed to get ourselves to Texas as quickly as possible to meet our daughter!

Adoption can be a long road, but I encourage you to have faith and believe that at just the right time, the right birth mom will make the choice to place her baby in your arms. Once you're holding your baby, you can take a deep breath and start enjoying the next stage of the journey. ♥

God Was With Us Through Our Long Wait For A Child

by Patty, an adoptive mother



Baby Jesse

Our adoption journey began a little over two years ago. We always thought we'd have children biologically, but our loving and living God had different plans. We pursued the state adoption program for about 18 months, but then, on our tenth wedding anniversary, we received an email from CFA reminding us about their infant program. We prayed, and switched programs. The expense was a concern, but we knew God would be faithful to our prayer that if it was not meant to be, it wouldn't happen, and the doors would shut. We

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Allen and Patty with Jesse

prayed that if it was meant to be, the doors would open wide.

On the morning of Friday, October 21, 2011, Gayle Fidanzo at CFA sent an email entitled, “Baby Boy”. Patty opened it early that afternoon to learn of a little 34-week preemie boy born early that morning who was going to be adopted, and Gayle asked permission to show our adoption profile book to the birth parents. Patty immediately replied, “Sounds good. Thanks!” She said a quick prayer for the Lord’s will to be done, and left it there. Our profile book had been shown to many birth parents in the past, so we trusted if it was meant to be, something would happen.

About an hour later, Gayle called to let us know the birth parents had picked us and she asked when we could come to the hospital. Patty said, “What?” as shock settled in and she realized we might become parents to this baby boy. Patty thought, we don’t even have any baby supplies or baby anything yet... just an unassembled crib we purchased the day before. (How ironic is that!)

Patty called Allen at work, the phone shaking in her hand, and told him all that was transpiring. Allen had just started his swing shift at work and had to find someone to take his place. We arrived

at the hospital that evening around 7:00 pm, still stunned.

Usually, adoptive parents have a few months, after they’ve been chosen by the birth parent(s) and learned the due date, to prepare for the baby’s arrival. Our situation was wildly different - it had only been a couple hours from finding out about the birth, to the possibility of the baby being ours.

We talked with the young birth parents for about 40 minutes and prayed together. The biological dad signed the consent to adoption paperwork that evening and the biological mom signed the next day. We really liked the birth parents, and they told us they couldn’t raise their baby boy, as they already had a one-year-old daughter and very little “means”. They wanted to pick an adoptive family who couldn’t have biological children, and they wanted that family to experience the same joy with this baby as they have with their daughter. This touched us.

The birth parents liked the name we had chosen: Jesse. We didn’t have a middle name yet because we wanted to honor the birth parents by using the name they would have given the baby. They didn’t choose one, so we selected Hosea. When we looked up the meaning of our son’s names a few days

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later, we found that Jesse means “the Lord exists”, and Hosea means “salvation”. We were amazed. We had liked the name “Jesse” for many years, and now it was as if God was reminding us He had existed with us through our long wait for a child.

Due to his premature condition, Jesse had been transferred to another hospital’s neonatal ICU shortly after he was born. The next day, October 22, we had the first opportunity to look at him and touch him in the NICU incubator, so tiny and connected to monitor wires and tubes.

We stayed two nights in a spare NICU room, and the other ten nights at a Ronald McDonald house, just a seven-minute walk away. Every few hours we had the opportunity to take Jesse’s temperature, change his diaper and feed him. It was neat to see his eyes open and hear his baby sounds.

Then on November 3 - Day 13 - at 4 pounds 13 ounces, we were able to take Jesse home! He was disconnected from all the monitors and we now

had a “wireless” baby. It was exciting and felt so good to finally have him home. Friends and family have been incredibly supportive and helpful, and everyone just loves our little Jesse man.

Our adoption is an open one, with an agreement of at least three letters/photos and one birth parent visit per year. We look forward to the visits, and believe the living Savior is doing an even greater work here - we not only get to parent Jesse, but we also get to encourage and befriend his birth parents in the future.

“All the earth and everything in it is the Lord’s.” He had a unique plan for our family from the start. Jesse is a gift from Him and we are so thankful. Remember, God works in ways that go beyond our thinking. Continue to trust and hope in Him. Realize that God works behind the scenes, and His unique plan for you will soon reveal itself. ♥

Trust God's Promises

by Steven, an adoptive father



Faith Elsie

Our God, in His goodness, has blessed our family through adoption, giving us four beautiful children. He wants us to raise them to love and trust Him. But He is also using our children to train us, as well.

Our family, like others, has recently had financial challenges. In early 2010, I was laid off from my job in Tennessee. We know God’s promises to provide for our needs, so we prayed, and our God kept His promise, providing a new job on the other

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Devon and Steven meeting baby Faith for the first time

side of the country in Oregon. But that meant moving expenses and selling a house in this economy. We eventually sold that house—at a loss. After all this, our finances did not look good by the world’s standards—but we have a God who keeps His promises.

The following year, we were expecting to get a financial boost in the form of a tax refund from our most recent adoption expenses. However, we received a letter from the IRS that not only denied this tax refund but also told us that we owed even more taxes. I understand that many other families have also recently been denied such adoption tax credits. This letter was devastating to our finances—but we have a God who keeps His promises.

We try to have daily family devotions, but about once a week we record these devotions, which I prepare ahead of time. The same evening after receiving that IRS letter, I was already prepared to teach my family about what “faith” is. Faith, belief, and trust refer to the same thing. Faith means to trust. You don’t truly believe something until you trust it. And true faith is not merely head knowledge.

I used a chair to illustrate this. I told my family that this well-made chair would certainly support my weight. But I also told them that this was only head knowledge until I sat on the chair and trusted its promise to support my weight. Next, I told my family about some of God’s promises that we must trust in, including the following:

Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’

For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. - Matthew 6:31-34, NASB

So, on the same day we received the IRS letter, I was teaching my family about the Lord’s promise to meet our needs. But would God keep His promise? Little did I know that God had even bigger plans.

The next morning, I got a phone call from our adoption agency. The birth mother of one of our children had given birth to another baby and we were asked to adopt her. But after the previous year’s losses and the devastating IRS letter, the only thing we had left was God’s promise to meet our needs.

We prayed and many people prayed with us. We determined that if the Lord wanted us to adopt this baby, He would provide the means, and that if He didn’t provide the means, this was not His will.

After two weeks, I called the adoption agency and told them they should look to another family since we couldn’t come up with the funds. We were very sad, but we resolved ourselves to the Lord’s will.

About an hour later, the adoption agency called me back. They arranged to only charge their minimum fee. They said that someone, I don’t know who, provided a huge gift for us. The remaining amount

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could be paid in reasonable monthly installments. We could adopt this baby! God had brought us to the point where we had nothing left but His promises—and He kept His promises!

He overwhelmed us as He kept providing over the next few weeks - fees for the home study, other adoption expenses, even an airline ticket. He covered our little girl's adoption fees when we could not pay them.

And that is why we named her Faith Elsie. Faith means to trust. Elsie is a form of Elizabeth, which means God's oath or God's promise. Her name

means to trust God's promise, and that is exactly what He taught us to do. We have a God who keeps His promises. ♥



Joshua and Laura with Faith

A Month of Celebration

by Kara Busick, CFA Post Adoption Coordinator



Ann Scott, former PLAN Director (left) and Kara Busick (right)

Each year, November is National Adoption Month, a time to raise awareness about the adoption of children and youth from foster care. November 19, 2011 was National Adoption Day, when activities and observations across the nation shone a spotlight on the needs of children who need permanent families. One such regional event took place at Portland's Lloyd Center Mall, where a variety of adoption advocates gathered to celebrate the joys of adoption. CFA's very own Post-Adoption Services Coordinator, Kara Busick, was invited to talk about her adoption experience. Here is an excerpt from what she shared that day:

Waiting, or "wait", is defined by Merriam Webster dictionary as "to remain stationary in readiness or expectation." We are all waiting for something - waiting for the traffic light to change so we can get to work on time, waiting for that jacket we love to go on sale... What did you wait for today? We all wait, but if I can think of anyone who truly lives the definition of the word *wait*, it is a child, waiting for their forever family. You see, this is not just a word, it's a reality. On a global scale, there

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*Shirley Busick with her children,
(left to right) Aaron, Kara and Amanda*

are 143 million orphans - without parents, without family - waiting. On a more local scale, there are 107,000 kids legally free for adoption in the United States, waiting for a family to call their own.

For me, this wait started 25 years ago half way around the world in Calcutta, India. My birth mother must have been very young, maybe even in her teens. On March 14, 1986 I was born at just 32 weeks gestation, and records indicate that my birth mother walked away after delivery. Weighing a mere 3 pounds and 3 ounces and experiencing health complications, I was given to International Mission of Hope Orphanage. I was waiting...for MY forever family.

My mother, a single woman, had always wanted to be a mother. On the opposite side of the world from where I was, she pursued an international adoption, and soon *waiting* turned into *coming home*. On July 8, 1986 the airplane flew into Portland International Airport, and my mom, along with a group of her friends, excitedly awaited my arrival... my coming home.... to be with my forever family.

Adoption has always been a huge positive element of my life. I have never seen it as anything less than an amazing story. In fact, you know those ice

breaker games where you have to tell a random fact about yourself? Well, whenever I played that game while I was growing up, I always had something interesting to say! "Hi, I'm Kara and I was adopted from India..." I mean, how much cooler is that than being Johnny whose favorite food is peanut butter?

So here I was, living life with this unique world view. In 1997, my mother decided to give me one of the greatest socializing agents there may be....siblings. As an only child, I dreamed of having siblings. Most of my peers had the sibling experience. I sat around and imagined what it would be like to have an instant playmate... and to be honest, I did think it would be nice to have someone else to blame when I spilled something on the carpet or broke something. This time, my mother chose to pursue a special needs adoption through the state foster care system. On August 1, 1997 we welcomed twins into our family: my beautiful sister and brother, Amanda and Aaron. At age 5, their story of waiting in foster care since 18 months of age also became a coming home story!

When I hear numbers like 143 million and 107 thousand, I don't see them as sad statistics... I see them as hopeful statistics, because it means that we get to give HOPE to that many kids. We get to change their reality of living the definition of waiting, into realization of what it means to come home to a forever family!

Today is a huge day, as we come together to celebrate adoption. It's a national day when we can come together across the country and marvel over this fabulous journey we all have in common. Every story we learn has three parts - a beginning, a middle, and an end. Today, on November 19, 2011, National Adoption Awareness Day, we celebrate all three parts together - waiting, coming home, and my favorite... forever. Let's remember the children who are waiting to come home forever. ♥

Greetings from the Executive Director: Rebecca Sexton

It has been an exciting year at CFA! We have had many placements and witnessed many adoption miracles. It is a privilege to be a part of bringing families together and supporting them in the adoption process.

While attending the CFA Adoption Awareness event in October, I was incredibly inspired by everyone there - the families who were featured, as well as CFA's extended community that supports adoption in so many ways. The mission of Christian Family Adoptions is to influence the world for Christ one child at a time through God's model of adoption. What is God's model? Acceptance and unconditional love. The Lord accepts us and loves us just as we are. Some of the children we place for adoption have special needs that require professional therapeutic help, but they all need a place to call home where they can heal and be loved.

Adoption is born of grief and loss and is full of the human condition. In the same way that the Father invites us to come just as we are, we are tasked with the call of bringing orphans into our homes, just as they are, with all of their unique needs. There are many unknowns about the process, the



Rebecca Sexton, holding Suniti. Suniti and her twin brother, Aram, were adopted through CFA's African American Infant Program in 2011.

children and the future, but we find solace and confidence in the Lord's promise to be with us every step of the way.

Thank you for your support of Christian Family Adoptions. We look forward to partnering with you in the year ahead. Happy New Year! ♥

"Fall Fun" Facebook Contest Winner



Justin

We asked our families to share their "fall fun"-themed photos and, based on the great response, it looks like they had an amazing autumn!

The prize-winning photo of Justin, left, earned his parents a \$50 Starbucks gift card. This picture, along with all the other entries, was posted on our Facebook page. Click here to see the entire collection:<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Christian-Family-Adoptions/174157087826>

Here's what Justin's parents have to say about their photogenic child: "We picked up our son Justin from his foster home 4 years ago (November 5th). Today Justin is a happy, productive 10-year-old. He has many friends, reads above grade level, takes Taekwondo, plays baseball and plays in his tree house in his spare time. He is a joy to his family and has inspired us to "find him a brother".