



## Madison Adoption Associates

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Dear MAA Families,

As we sit here patiently waiting for some winter weather to arrive, we look forward to another exciting year of placing more children with their forever families in 2016! This past year has seen our numbers grow as many new families experienced the joy of adoption.

Our Madison agency staff continued to see many changes in their own families. Our Illinois Office Manager and Social Worker, Sara Oglesby, completed the adoption of her two foster children and these precious little ones now have a beautiful mommy who is all theirs! Thank you for all your prayers while Sara navigated the maze of domestic adoption while still working diligently to help so many others complete their adoption steps.

Brooke and Rick Henningfeld returned home from China in November with two darling new daughters. Their ever growing family should make it hard for Brooke to continue her daily work of advocating for all the children, yet she somehow makes it look easy.

MAA considerably increased the number of children adopted in 2015. We predict that 150 children will be home by the end of this year! This is by far our biggest year ever and we are humbled by the trust bestowed on us by our adoptive families. We are so lucky and blessed to be able to fulfill our mission by watching many of the kids that we met personally finally come home to families of their own. MAA remains a strong partner in China, while also being fortunate to have worked with the Philippines, El Salvador, and Bulgaria. We are also working in Pennsylvania to offer post permanency services.



As our caseloads grew this year, it was necessary to hire new staff to keep our programs running efficiently. We have welcomed several team staff members; Erica Parrish is a new China Adoption Caseworker, serving our families on their adoption journeys. Her optimism and quick wit are a welcome addition to the Delaware office. Lydia Stewart, who relocated to California last year, continues to aid our clients by assisting with advocating for waiting children. Even though we miss seeing her daily smile, we feel fortunate to still have her representing our agency. We also welcomed three wonderful new Social Workers: Patti Farrell in Pennsylvania; Erica Fisher-Kaslander in Northern New Jersey, and Shelly Connor in Southern Illinois. Amanda and Jessica continue to serve our adoptive families as Caseworkers; Bev is our ever-so reliable bookkeeper; Heather handles our post-placement reporting and manages our database; and Sara is still doing marketing and advocating for our waiting children. We are proud to be represented by such knowledgeable and kind individuals as we help prepare our families for their new roles as adoptive parents.



MAA has enjoyed our wonderful One-to-One Orphanage Partnerships with China and are excited to added three new partnerships in 2015, bringing our total partnerships to 15!!! The CCCWA brought back former Director Zhang Shifeng. Diana was able to personally welcome him back when she visited China in November. We remain impressed with CCCWA for their concern for the children, and helping to simplify the adoption process, allowing more children to join loving homes. We hear that more changes are on the horizon, which will help both the children who are waiting to be adopted and the families who want to bring them home. MAA will keep our families informed of all changes as they go into effect. As many agencies are sadly being forced to close their doors, we are so grateful that CCCWA has allowed us so many opportunities to grow and better the lives of all waiting children, even those who will never have their own family.

This year in China we made cash donations of over \$120,000 to improve the quality of life for waiting children. These donations provided surgeries and medical supplies; teachers and physical therapists; bedding, clothing, and furniture; caretaker trainings; and capital improvements in our partner orphanages.

Our donations do not stop there. Last year we have made a decision to work with In His Hands Orphan Outreach, which is headed by Michelle McGowan, who also serves as MAA's Hosting Coordinator. MAA supplied 100% of the funding to build a duplex Orphan Home in Haiti to help the many children who are alone and in need of the most basic necessities. The house was completed this summer and is already providing children a safe and loving environment. They are now working on additional buildings on the property, including the missionary house and worship center. If you would like to help the IHH team with this project, we need you! Please contact Michelle McGowan at [Michelle@inhishands.org](mailto:Michelle@inhishands.org) if you are interested.



As our services have grown to help more foster children in the US, we have also expanded our humanitarian efforts here at home. Earlier in the year, we funded a Doctoral Clinical Psychology Scholarship through Intercommunity Action in Pennsylvania. This scholarship is given in honor of Ajay Reimer, a very special boy from China who passed away in December 2013. This scholarship will support mental health and behavioral services for underprivileged children in Pennsylvania.



MAA also hired a private tutor who is now providing weekly tutoring to several children in the Delaware area. This has been a huge success for the children and we are continuing this project into the New Year. We also provided a \$10,000 donation to the general foster care fund to help with needs that continuously arise. Before the year end, we will be purchasing a computer for a foster child who is working on his GED and a specialized wheelchair for a young girl that will enable her to be more mobile. We also purchased suitcases, coats and gifts for foster children in Beaver County, Pennsylvania.

As you may know, MAA has been getting more involved with projects to help aging-out youth, both in China and at home. We are thrilled to report that we are fully sponsoring an annual "Teens in Transition Day", run by Casa Passaic County in New Jersey! This event is a full-day workshop training for kids, ages 15-21, who will be aging out of foster care. The workshop covers the resources available to them, programs for which they are eligible, educational programs and job training. It has been so wonderful to see what a difference each project has made for the kids! We are looking forward to sharing more success stories in the next year!

We have also done great things in the Philippines this year! We funded three salaries for a wonderful child care agency that was struggling to make ends meet. Now they can stop worrying and just love on their beautiful kiddos! We also have plans to fund a staff member at another child care agency to help prepare adoption files of more children, helping them to be adopted. We also committed to provide them with formula and nutrition through 2016. Finally, we are in the final planning stages of a project that will take off in 2016. Our friends, Pastor John and Virgie Arancillo, run a lovely church in Fishport, Philippines. In addition to putting a new roof on the church and a safety fence around it, we are also thrilled to commence "Project School Bound"! Due to extreme poverty, the children of Fishport are unable to attend school as they cannot afford the \$40 uniform or the cost of books. There is also no transportation available to get them to school and back home safely. In addition to purchasing the books and uniforms for over 40 children, we are in the process of purchasing a Jeepney and possibly a taxi to help the children attend school. While the children are in school, the men will take shifts with the Jeepney and taxi, earning income, which will then fund other transportation for the children, help the men earn income for their families, while saving a little extra for another taxi, so the trend will

continue. We are hopeful that this initial donation will be able to make monumental changes in the lives of these wonderful people!



If you are inspired by any of these ideas, we humbly ask that you help us continue these projects! Remember many of these causes have been possible because of the generous donations made by adoptive families like you. We thank you for your support and remind you that all of these donations go directly to the children who need the most help!

Before Guatemala closed to international adoption, MAA was a top agency there for over 30 years. We wanted to continue to support a country in Latin America, so in El Salvador, our donations are given to the Hand Maidens, headed by Sister Gloria, a nun who has spent the majority of her life ministering to people in need. She has built maternity homes, libraries, funded meals for children and the elderly, and is always looking for new ways to help. We have just been notified that Sister Gloria has been called back to Miami, Florida to head up a new project while another woman works tirelessly to continue the Sister's work. Last year MAA purchased school books for the children of one village through the Hand Maidens. MAA will continue to seek out projects to help the people in ES since Latin America is always in my heart. Although we will continue to help the people in Latin America, MAA made a difficult decision last year to close down the ES Adoption Program. At Thanksgiving, a very special boy finally made it home to his parents and relatives. We know this boy is very special and will be successful in the years ahead because his family never stopped trying to adopt him despite the stumbling blocks were placed in their path. I truly feel that he is one of my most treasured memories of 2015, because *he is finally home*. As my retirement draws closer and the adoption cases in El Salvador are now taking about 4-5 years to complete, we will work - with the assistance of Sister Gloria and efforts of Edwin and Rick, our ES partners - to bring home our last two boys from ES in the coming year.

Not too long ago, we asked for you to keep the Gonzalez family in your hearts and prayers as both Jose Luis and Grace fought cancer, the hardest battle of their lives. I can now tell you that they are healthy and enjoying the lives that they have worked so hard to establish. I hope that in the year ahead I can once again travel to Guatemala to see them personally because family should never be separated.

In March, MAA had the opportunity to travel to China to meet some of the children who were being adopted by our client families and others who still needed families. It is an exciting time to hug, snuggle, cuddle with these children, as well as interview each child who waits for a family. Since I spent my birthday in China I was treated like royalty the entire trip. Flowers, delicious meals and massages became the norm. (I must make a mental note to travel again the same time in 2016...**only**

**kidding!**) Believe it or not, as great as that pampering was, I do so love to visit the children. As I get to see them over and over, their comfort level increases and they let me into their hearts. In March, we chose 22 children who would come to Illinois in July for our China Summer Hosting Program. As always, Michelle McGowan did an outstanding job! I was blessed to travel with Diana and two of my grandchildren to meet all the children as they picnicked with their host families. The love was undeniable and because of these efforts, 16 children found their forever families. The CCCWA has recognized MAA for our success with the Summer Hosting Program and is allowing the program to continue.



In November, Diana had the opportunity to return to China to advocate for more One-to-One Orphanage Partnerships and meet our 2016 Hosting Children as she travelled from city to city for almost two weeks. Meanwhile, in Beijing, Leonette





Boiarski led six advocates and two Madison Adoption Associates staff, to our first of hopefully many, Ambassadors of Hope Program through China Center for Children's Welfare and Adoption (CCCWA). Madison Adoption Associates was one of three United States agencies invited to participate in this new program focused on meeting children in need of homes, spending time getting to know them, and then returning to the US to advocate for these children to potential families. We met six children who are in desperate need of homes. The adoptions of these children all have \$6500 in grants so please be sure to check out these awesome kids! They are on our website at [www.madisonadoption.org](http://www.madisonadoption.org).

Speaking of website, did you notice MAA's new site yet? Our website redesign team of Bev, Heather, and Sara worked many extra hours this year to create a sharp, informative, and professional new look that more accurately depicts our status in the world of adoption! The website team will continue to improve the interactive nature of the website and will move to phase 2 of the project, which is to develop a client specific area to assist our adoptive families.

Although we did not host any children from the Philippines this past summer, we did match several waiting children from the Special Home Finding list, including a sibling group of 5 (YES, FIVE!) who have been waiting for many years. They will join the perfect family, who is lovingly waiting for them with open arms. They should be home in early Spring! (Geez, I love my job!) ☺ Michelle McGowan was in the Philippines early fall to meet with ICAB and attend the Global Conference. We are hoping to have her return early next year to meet more children that can be hosted next summer. If you have ever thought about hosting, please ask Michelle about it. It is a wonderful, rewarding, enriching experience both for the children and families!

Bulgaria remains a slow process, but one we know will have a happy ending for many beautiful children. We are hoping to make a trip there in 2016 with the goal of establishing new partnerships and increasing our waiting child program. One of our Board Members, Martin Konov, is from Bulgaria, so it is a country close to our hearts and we hope to see more children coming home in the upcoming years!

Well, that about sums up our year! We are so thankful and feel so lucky that an agency that was started out from one room of my home, has grown into an organization that is able to help so many, both here and abroad. It is a privilege and an honor to serve our children and YOU - our wonderful families. How fortunate are we that we come to work every day excited, and leave feeling happy and fulfilled. Thank you for your faith in us and allowing us to do what we love.

We thank you for your love, support and confidence bestowed in our agency. Madison Adoption Associates extends our love and well wishes to all of you this joyous holiday season. With the New Year, we pray that only peace and happiness fill your home!

Please keep in touch! We love hearing from you with your heartwarming calls, letters and cards!

God bless!

*Aleda & the Staff of MAA*

