



IMPACT



THE **BARKER** FOUNDATION since 1945 **2008** ANNUAL REPORT



From the President and Executive Director



Dear Friends,

Against the backdrop of a struggling economy and a dramatic slowdown in international adoptions, the Barker Foundation nonetheless had a remarkable year. In concert with the Barker Board of Trustees and the Barker community, our small but dedicated staff persevered in Barker's core mission of finding permanent loving homes for children—all those pictured on the cover of this Annual Report, and more. Indeed, the most children in Barker's history—112 children—found permanency through adoption in 2008.

While Barker has never measured "success" by placement numbers alone, the compelling faces on the cover remind us of our organization's impact. This impact extends beyond the security given to each child, for when children flourish, then our communities and the world beyond also flourish.

In a year when many adoption agencies closed their doors or merged, Barker remained robust, yet constantly mindful of how best to channel its resources. We endeavored to meet both the spirit and the letter of the law, as we implemented the Hague Treaty and faced the

challenges inherent in a new model. On the domestic front, we continued to insist on the highest standards of practice in counseling women who are considering adoption in our infant program. Nor have we turned away from the enormous challenges of addressing the needs of the 500,000 older children in public foster care, and are gratified to see initial success in *Project Wait No Longer*. Finally, our post-adoption programs continued to expand and respond to requests from all members of the family of adoption, whether birth parents, adoptive parents, or adoptees.

We now ask for your critical support as we work to increase Barker's funding, so that it can continue as one of the nation's premier child welfare organizations. Ten years ago, the Friends of Barker endowment campaign laid a

solid foundation; the Hillside Family Foundation's transformative gift in 2008 now gives us a 5-year window to further strengthen our financial base. What drives all of us? It is the steadfast belief that we can have an impact on a child's life. The Chilean poet and Nobel Prize winner, Gabriela Mistral, captures the urgent need and inherent vulnerability of children: ***"We are guilty of many errors and many faults but our worst crime is abandoning the children, neglecting the fountain of life. Many of the things we need can wait. The child cannot. Right now is the time his bones are being formed, his blood is being made, and his senses are being developed. To him we cannot answer 'Tomorrow.' His name is 'Today.'"*** Thank you for supporting our mission so that we can respond ***today***—and for future generations of children.

Marilyn Regier, Ph.D., LCSW-C
Executive Director

Robert A. Long
President, Board of Trustees

Our Mission

The Barker Foundation serves all members of the adoption circle—birth parents, adoptive parents, adopted persons, and anyone else whose life is touched by adoption. The Barker Foundation is an advocate for ethical, respectful and child-centered adoption practices.

2008 — Year in Review: Expanding Influence

One hundred twelve children found permanent families through The Barker Foundation during 2008, a historic high. One hundred twelve children will not live out their childhoods in orphanages, or foster homes, or in other possibly unstable circumstances. Or, as a Barker staff member put it, “They will know who is going to be cheering them at graduation and who will be walking them down the wedding aisle.”

Finding families for children is the core of our mission and yet just the starting point. A high point of the year was the visit to the Annual

Conference in March of a young Korean woman who had placed her child for adoption (see page 6). This brave young birth mother marveled at the birth parents she met at Barker—birth parents who talked publicly about their experiences, served on the Board of Trustees, and were working with adoptive parents and professionals to run the conference. After an emotional weekend, she left determined to make a difference for birth parents in Korea.

While the challenges to adoption continually increased, so did the opportunities. In 2008, our International

Program placed 66 children from Korea, Guatemala, Colombia, Ethiopia, and Ukraine. Although our established program in China experienced a slowdown, we

system, began to pay off (see page 7). Under the guidance of a full-time director, four children came home to permanent families. The number is tiny compared to

This year has been unforgettable, and we know it couldn't have happened without you.

Tricia Obester and Jon Van Camp, new parents

were approved for a Waiting Children program in China for special needs children, and we opened a program to find families for children from Nepal. In February, we received a five-year accreditation by the Hague Convention Accreditation Authority, the highest level awarded.

Domestic placements increased almost 50 percent over 2007, with 46 children joining families. Barker provided its hallmark counseling services to even greater numbers of pregnant women, enabling many of them to choose to parent the children they were expecting—an essential component of our philosophy. And after three years, the efforts invested in *Project Wait No Longer*, Barker's program to place children from the foster care

the thousands still needing homes, but for those four children, the impact is greater than anything that will ever happen to them.

In addition to facilitating the vital exchange of information and contact (see page 6), Family and Post-Adoption Services initiated even more opportunities for new parents, parents of school age children, parents of adolescents, birth parents, and adopted children to learn and share in group settings. The values disseminated in these experiences shape the nature of adoption in the ever-expanding Barker Foundation community.

Yet no matter how large the numbers or how far-flung the influence, the Barker impact will always be felt one child, one family, at a time.



In 2008...

Aaron and Amy welcomed Elijah
Adam and Stephanie welcomed Nathan
Albion and Jenifer welcomed Julie
Allyson welcomed Alexandra
Amy and Tracy welcomed Reece
Andrew and Eileen welcomed Angelina
Angie and Brinton welcomed Lucas
Ann Marie and Jeremy welcomed Emma
Antionette and Sidney welcomed Kyra
Ari and Amy welcomed Jacob
Becky and Jon welcomed Lila
Bernie and Sandy welcomed Mary Claire
Bethanne and Ingo welcomed Kahler
and Marlee
Bill and Lorraine welcomed Hunter
Brad and Jackie welcomed Caleb
Brian and Mary Ellen welcomed Norah
Brooke and Kirk welcomed Hannah

**Thank you, thank you,
thank you from the
bottom of our hearts.**

Ann Marie King, new parent

Candyce and Roberto welcomed
Jonathan
Carmelina and Dave welcomed Ava
Carol and John welcomed Joseph
Charlotte and John welcomed Kaia
Cheryl and David welcomed Grace
Christine welcomed Ava
Chuck and Suzette welcomed Alexis
Cindy welcomed Jamal
Cindy welcomed Marcus
Colleen and Bob welcomed Boden
Dana and Russell welcomed Chandler
Daniel and Tracy welcomed Ashley
Darren and Kelly welcomed Ethan
David and Jennifer welcomed Ellie
Deb and Tom welcomed Micaela
Derek and Sylvie welcomed Ahrin
Dwayne and Erika welcomed Langdon
Dwight and Charlotte welcomed Danielle
Edward and Tracy welcomed Mya

Eiko and Bob welcomed
Sumi
Ellen and Rob welcomed
Charlie
Elizabeth and Andrew
welcomed Paola, Daisy
and Michael
Elysia welcomed Wilson
Eric and Debbie welcomed
William
Ester and Steven
welcomed Sarah
Eugene and Jeannie
welcomed Andrew
Fabiola and Paul welcomed Michael
Frank and Kristi welcomed Grace and
Barbara
Geoffrey and Jennifer welcomed Jillian
Gisell and Joel welcomed Noah
Greg welcomed Kyan
Heather and Shane welcomed
Ethan
Holly and Robert welcomed
Eric
Inderbir and Rosy welcomed
Garima
Ingrid and Kenneth welcomed
Izabella
Jakki and Alex welcomed
Noah
Janet and Richard welcomed Julianna
Jennifer and Joe welcomed Max
Jerry and Kristy welcomed William
Jim and Elise welcomed Vincent
John and Sharon welcomed Sandra
Joyal and Gregory welcomed Addie
Karen and Dan welcomed Adam
Kathryn and Richard welcomed Annalie
Katrina and Justin welcomed Miles
Kay and Jim welcomed Nathan
Keith and Lauren welcomed Grace
Ken and Chris welcomed Ty
Kevin and Krista welcomed Shannon
Kia and Darren welcomed Zane
Kirk and Ellen welcomed Edward
Kirsten and Jamie welcomed Elsy
Kristy and Bill welcomed Annice
Lauren and Alex welcomed James
Leah and Don welcomed Mollie



Lee and Jennifer welcomed Kadence
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Terry and Mary welcomed Margaret
Theresa and Philios welcomed Theodore
Tim and Betsy welcomed William
Toisha and Mike welcomed Eagan
Tom and Amy welcomed Silas
Tonia and Jeff welcomed Thunder
Tracey and Erik welcomed Eleanor
Tricia and Jon welcomed Langston
Valerie and Doug welcomed Eliora
Wendy and William welcomed Leah
Wes and Diana welcomed Payton
Will and Susan welcomed Daniel

IMPACT: two families connected and strengthened

Adoption plays out over a lifetime, but watershed moments punctuate its slow evolution.

For Eddie Tucker, the life-changing instant came when he picked up the telephone and heard the voice of “Shana,” a young woman he and his wife Tracey had met a few weeks earlier. “Hey, Mr. Eddie. Your daughter’s here.” Shana was calling from the hospital where she had just given birth.

For Eddie’s wife Tracey, the transformative point in time came later that day when they visited Shana and the baby. A nurse came into the hospital room to ask Shana a question concerning the newborn. “Ask her mom,” the young woman responded, turning to Tracey.

When Shana first contacted Barker, she was 19 years old,

mothering two children under the age of two, and pregnant. Circumstances had compelled her to leave her children’s father. The Barker birth parent counselor who worked with Shana said that the young woman was one of the most inspiring birth mothers she had ever met. “She faced some of the most severe challenges I’ve seen in this job, but she has a spirit that never quits.” The grant-funded support from Barker helped the young woman with temporary housing and childcare. Compassionate, objective emotional support allowed her to make an informed decision about what was best for her and all her children.

The Tuckers seemed tailor-made for this young mother who could not imagine never seeing her youngest child after relinquishment. When they heard that Shana had two



other children, Tracey and Eddie knew that openness was the only option for them. “Our daughter *has* to know her brother and sister,” Tracey said. The couple credits their pre-adoption classes at Barker for helping them understand how openness can work. “We know we can open or close it as much as we think appropriate,” Eddie said. “It’s going to unfold over time.”

In the year since the birth of the bright-eyed and energetic Mya, the two families have

visited several times. They celebrate the three children’s birthdays together. “We’re one, connected family even though we don’t see each other all the time.” Shana now has a job and a home. For the Tuckers, who were married almost 18 years when Mya entered their lives, the change is clear: “It’s no longer about us. Our lives revolve around Mya, and we’d never change that.”

It was so important to know that Barker was attentive to the needs of our daughter’s birth mother. Barker was there for her.

Tracey Tucker



She traveled halfway around the world to represent Korean birth mothers at Barker's 2008 annual conference focusing on birth parents. Coming from a culture where adoption is still tinged with shame and secrecy, she had no idea what awaited her. At the conference panel session, the young woman spoke tremulously through a translator to the families crowding the break-out room, "In Korea, we have a belief that when someone dies, you

The following is a translated excerpt from a letter this birth mother recently wrote reflecting on the impact of her visit:

I heard that there were many people who remembered me. I appreciate that. Sometimes I think about that time, too. My life has been changed since I went to the conference. I am trying to live without the feeling of guilt. I saw [my birth son's] pictures that his adoptive parents sent. He has

Hearing the Korean birth mother speak was life-changing.

Conference evaluation comment

bury him in your heart. I have buried my baby in my heart." When the audience was given the opportunity to respond, parents assured her that they strive always to keep birth parents real and loving for their children and would welcome future connection. "You do not need to bury your son," one mother told her. Those in the room later said they felt as if they could see the child released from the depths of this young woman's being.

been growing up so well. My life has become so stable now. You, all of the adoptive parents I met through The Barker Foundation, did all of it. I was quite relieved when I saw your devoted love for the children. Thank you, all the adoptive parents I met there.

Please give much love to the children who you gave birth to through your heart. I talk about your love for the children to the mothers in Haerimwon. Thank you. Be happy all the time.

Janie Harris was one of the many adult adoptees who sought information and guidance from the Post-Adoption and Family Services department in 2008. She generously shares her story here:

My life has always been filled with love, friendship, good health, and good breaks. My parents and brother are, and always have been, loving, supportive, and very present in my life. When Barker found them for me, they made a glorious match. I am so grateful!

I waited 50+ years to inquire after my birth parents. Timidly and with some angst, I emailed The Barker Foundation. Instantly, I was in contact with a sensitive, understanding, efficient and knowledgeable professional, committed to helping me. With her I felt safe. I felt confident.

She delivered! Even after 50 years, Barker was able to trace my roots and help me find my relatives.

I waited too long to actually meet my birth parents. They are both deceased. I learned that they married each other and led an exciting life sailing throughout the world, living on their boat, keeping logs and journals of their adventures. I now know them through the letters, photographs, newspaper clips, and memorabilia generously offered by distant relatives discovered by Barker. What treasures! This evolving portrait of the family I never knew addresses a host of confusions that have swirled about my psyche

Janie Harris is an avid sailor, following in the wake of both her birth parents (above right) and her adoptive parents (below right).



...deep into the heart of a child

throughout my life. The information is replete with answers and overflowing with comfort. I am making more sense to myself. What a gift!

I am indebted to The Barker Foundation for preserving the clues to my birth parents' lives, for the skill that connected me to the people who could open up my past, and for the professionalism that allowed me to make this journey with trust and confidence.



Toni and Jeff Heitzmann eventually felt so frustrated and hopeless in their efforts to adopt an older child that they bought Washington Capitals season tickets. The purchase was a kind of compensation—and they figured they could afford the time if they were going to remain childless. Fortunately for everyone, they had to turn the tickets back in.

The bright, funny ten-year-old named Thunder loves that story. Of course, he might have loved it even more if the Heitzmanns could have kept the tickets along *with* him—but he still got to go to a few Caps games. His face lights up and he bounces in his chair as he talks sports and describes the “shrine” he plans to build to the Steelers’ Willie Parker in the family basement—once Dad gets the basement fixed up.

The joy and satisfaction the three of them take in making plans for the future is palpable. Not much more than a year ago, Thunder was living in a residential center in Pennsylvania. Jeff and Toni had worked with two different adoption agencies that did not seem responsive to their needs. But then they discovered Thunder on a waiting child registry.

I actually have a home with people who love me.

Thunder Heitzmann, 10 years old



Fortunately, by then, they had also found The Barker Foundation. “The hardest thing about this whole process,” Toni says, “was getting the right agency. Barker has helped us every step of the way. When we have struggles, they’re always there with a helping hand, giving us ideas and suggestions to consider. It’s so important.”

The Heitzmanns are currently working to adopt Thunder’s eight-year-old sister, Elizabeth. The three of them are hopeful.

When asked if he feels he’s had a hard life, Thunder answers simply, “Yes.” And what about now? “It’s better. It’s fun.” He points to the couple sitting on the sofa across from him. “I love those two guys.”

Hague Convention Accreditation

When the Department of State published its inaugural list of agencies accredited to provide adoption services in Hague Convention countries in February, The Barker Foundation was not only on the list, but was granted the highest level of accreditation: five years, out of a possible three-, four- or five-year approval. The accreditation places Barker squarely in the ranks of organizations committed to the highest ethical practices in child welfare and adoption all over the world.



Sarah Mejac (left) and Rosalie Daelemans (right) present Kate Coopersmith with tokens of appreciation.

New Parent Groups

Forty years ago, Barker mothers started getting together in “playgroups” with other mothers and their new babies. They rejoiced, sympathized, and learned from each other. Today’s popular New Parent Groups are much the same, except that a social worker joins the mix—and dads come, too.



Focus on Birth Parents

Our March conference, “Connected Lives: Understanding the Birth Parent Experience in Adoption and Foster Care,” was a landmark event—led by and devoted to birth parents. Birth parent speakers from Canada, Scotland, and Korea joined local panelists to enlighten and move attendees. And at the annual meeting in May, we honored Kate Coopersmith for her 20 years of extraordinary support of and advocacy for birth parents.

Left: Tracey Johnson (left), with daughter Eleanor, shares parenting experiences with Kristi Carroll and her daughters Grace and Barbara.

Right: Homeland Tour families gather for a group portrait in Bogotá.



Don and Rosanna Weaver enjoy the picnic with their children Eric, Alberto, and Sharada.

Family Picnic

Newly minted families blending with old friends, beautiful weather, lots of food, and a train ride. What more could one ask?

Homeland Tour

The Colombia Homeland Tour, resumed after a year’s hiatus, led eight families with teenage and young adult children to experience the country of their birth. “The visit to FANA proved life-changing for our daughter,” wrote Barker father Joseph Slobodzian. “She was told the story of her birth mother and how she came to be adopted. Our meeting





Marilyn Regier, Mercedes Rosario de Martinez and Flor Angela Rojas flank three former FANA babies (l-r): Laynie Lightfield, Suzi Bass, and Mariela Kuchenbrod.

with the young women at the maternity home was also transformative. Love, tears, and emotion communicated more than any language.” Barker’s tour is the only Colombian homeland trip sponsored by a U.S. agency.

FANA Visit

The historic warm relationship between Barker and Colombia’s FANA was celebrated in 2008 with a visit

from Mercedes Rosario de Martinez, FANA’s Founder and President, and Flor Angela Rojas, Director of Social Services. In a highlight of the trip, a waiting family was given the referral of a child; former Barker Executive Director Robin Allen made the surprise presentation.

Kids and Teens

Where else can you go where everyone understands? Children in Grades 1–2 and 3–5 met for several sessions to explore the concept of adoption, as well as their own personal stories. Teens gathered once again to “chill” for a weekend at the 4-H Center in Chevy Chase—and to talk about adoption, too.



Jeff and Laurie Chenoweth, with son Jaemin, helped welcome Mrs. Lim and Ms. Park to the Barker community

Korean Exchange

From opposite sides of the earth, Barker and Social Welfare Society in Korea work cooperatively on behalf of children. This year, in a historic first professional exchange, SWS social workers Ms. PARK, Hei Jung and Mrs. LIM, Sun Hee spent a summer week learning about Barker’s practices in person. In the fall, Barker staff members Sue

Hollar and Kathie Lehner returned the visit to expand their own knowledge of adoption in Korea. The SWS staff wrote of their respect for adoptive parents here, “who make continuous effort to have their children know Korean tradition and culture, love their children from the bottom of their hearts, love their children’s birth mothers, and love Korea where their children were born.”



Kids’ Group participant Elizabeth Carney shares the story of her adoption.

With gratitude to every one of our 2008 donors

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Gleason Family Foundation
Hillside Family Foundation
Lois and Richard England Foundation
Mary Cannon Morris Charitable Foundation
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If you made a gift during 2008, and your name does not appear on this list, please let us know. Contact Beth Kirby at 301-664-9664, ext. 213, or at bkirby@barkerfoundation.org.

Financial Overview

In a financially turbulent year, when *The Washington Post* reported charitable contributions had decreased by two percent nationwide, the Barker family increased its giving by 15%. Contributions included a transformative donation from the Hillside Foundation, the first installment of a one-million-dollar

gift over five years. In addition, grant income was up by 50%. The Barker impact, whether in the form of assistance to one pregnant woman or the ability to uphold adoption standards worldwide, relies for power on the belief and support of this generous community.

Foundation Grants

We gratefully acknowledge the following foundations for grants awarded in 2008 in response to our submitted proposals:

Clark-Winchcole Foundation
 Freddie Mac Foundation
 George Preston Marshall Foundation
 Jim and Carol Trawick Foundation
 John Edward Fowler Memorial Foundation
 The Lois & Richard England Family Foundation
 The Max & Victoria Dreyfus Foundation
 St. Mark Catholic Church
 William S. Abell Foundation

Consolidated Statement of Activities

Year Ended
 December 31, 2008
 unaudited

	The Barker Foundation	Friends of Barker, Inc.	Total
Support and Revenue			
Fees for services	\$ 914,155		\$ 914,155
Grants	191,650		191,650
Contributions	725,132	2,718	727,850
Other	116,569		116,569
Revenue	1,947,506	2,718	1,950,223
Investment income net of fees		76,144	76,144
Unrealized investment depreciation		(1,006,257)	(1,006,257)
Transfer of allowed investment income	150,375	(150,375)	0
Total Revenue	2,097,881	(1,077,770)	1,020,110
Expenses			
Program services	1,702,267		1,702,267
General & administrative	249,112	2,387	251,499
Fundraising	124,556		124,556
Total Expenses	2,075,935	2,387	2,078,322
Change in Net Assets	21,946	(1,080,157)	(1,058,211)
Net Assets—beginning of year	(134,621)	3,356,995	3,222,374
Net Assets—end of year	\$ (112,675)	\$ 2,276,838	\$ 2,164,163



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Barker's dedication to all of the parties involved in the adoption process is not only genuine, but filled with compassion and true caring. This is what makes Barker different from any other agency.

Peter Wiernicki, adoption attorney



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Blessed is the influence of one true, loving human soul on another.

George Eliot (*nee* Mary Anne Evans, British novelist, 1819–1880)



Photo by John Spaulding

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BARKER
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www.barkerfoundation.org
info@barkerfoundation.org
1-800-673-8489

Offices

Maryland
7979 Old Georgetown Road
First Floor
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-664-9664

District of Columbia
1066 30th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20007
202-298-7724

Virginia
2957 Monticello Drive
Falls Church, VA 22042
703-698-5218

Accreditations and Affiliations

The Barker Foundation is licensed in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. The agency is Hague-accredited through the Council on Accreditation (COA) and a member of the Joint Council on International Children's Services, Local Independent Charities, the Maryland Coalition for Adoption, the Maryland Association of Non-Profit Organizations, the North American Council on Adoptable Children, the Virginia Association of Licensed Child Placing Agencies and the Center for Nonprofit Advancement.

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