

WINTER 2007

## Barker's Annual Conference to Examine Our Roles in Transforming Adoption

**A** United States senator and an inspirational author head the program in this year's Annual Conference. With generous support from the Freddie Mac Foundation, Barker's 13th Annual Conference once again promises to educate and inspire our regional adoption community, with distinguished speakers, remarkable panels, and the always-popular book sales of adoption-related materials.

With the overarching theme of "The *Unfinished* Adoption Revolution: Our Role in Transforming Adoption," the event is scheduled for Saturday, March 10, 8:45 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., at The Shady Grove Conference Center in Rockville, Maryland.

Senator Mary Landrieu will open the conference with her reflections on "The State of Adoption and What it Means for Each of Us." A nationally-recognized

advocate for adoption and herself the adoptive mother of two children, Sen. Landrieu has consistently worked to sponsor legislation which removes barriers to finding permanent homes for children. Her remarks will blend her personal experience and professional insights, with a Q & A session to follow her speech.

Also featured is author and social psychologist, Jaiya John, speaking on "Honoring the Whole Child in Adoption." His presentation will constitute a compassionate call to families and society to reexamine what it truly means to honor a child. The founder and Executive Director of Soul Water Rising, he is also an adopted person. Following his presentation, Dr. John will sign his award-winning adoption

Lynette Clemetson, *New York Times* domestic correspondence; Marilyn Schoettle, educator and author of the *W.I.S.E. Up!* program designed to help children communicate about adoption; Abigail Wiebeson, Head of the Lowell School for 19 years, and a consistent advocate for a curriculum which ensures that adoption is understood by parents, teachers, and students; Jelani Freeman, who grew up in foster

care and is now working in the Office of Youth Programs for the District of Columbia; and the staff of the Barker Foundation serving in key conference roles.

The conference committee includes Chris Intagliata, Mary Kurfess, Carol Huttar, Jelani Freeman, Eliza Niemann, Eliza Newlin Carney, Linda Adams, Beth Kirby, and Sue Culver. For more information, please call Sue at the Maryland Office, 301-664-9664, or

download the conference program and registration on our website: [www.barkerfoundation.org](http://www.barkerfoundation.org). ■



U.S. Senator Mary L. Landrieu (above) and inspirational author Jaiya John (at right).



memoir *Black Baby White Hands: A View from the Crib*. He has spoken to more than 50,000 people and has appeared on CNN, Fox, BET, and National Public Radio.

Following lunch, the afternoon program features six break-out sessions and panels of birth parents, adopted persons, and adoptive parents. Guest moderators include



## FROM THE *Executive Director*

The Annual Conference is one of Barker's enduring contributions to the adoption community.

Each year—for many years—we have gathered to listen and share, not only to the experts, but also to those who have lived the life of adoption. Like many of you, I have found the conference to be life-changing in one way or another, and I was a conference attendee long before I joined the Barker staff. Certainly the agency's commitment to pre-adoption and post-adoption education was one of the chief factors that initially drew me to Barker. Adoption is amazingly complex, and education is vitally important in sorting out the issues.

The conference has a rich tradition of engaging speakers who are seminal thinkers in the adoption field. And long before the March conference became an annual event, the Foundation often featured distinguished

lecturers at the May Annual Meeting. Over 40 years ago, for example, both Pearl Buck and David Kirk addressed the Barker Community in a foreshadowing of the Annual Conference tradition. Often the guest speakers gain as much as they give, for they find the dialogue with the Barker community to be stimulating indeed. No better example exists than luminary David Kirk, the "Grandfather of Adoption Research," who has written that his interaction with Barker parents provided the stimulus for his classic *Shared Fate*. Each year our conference participants also report learning a great deal from those who may not be "experts" but who are part of the family of adoption. Thus we continue to retain another unique aspect of the Annual Conference—the full participation of birth parents, adoptive parents, and adopted persons, who add their voices to those of the adoption professionals.

Conventional wisdom has it that conferences are a bit passé, with most people preferring

internet research, web conferencing, and other modern means of interaction. It is true that some simply prefer to remain within the comfort of their home, dressed in jeans, pajamas, slippers, reading a good book or visiting an adoption website. But I suggest that we can still "make the case" for live conferences. There are times when the solitary approach simply lacks the power to excite and inspire that is produced by the synergy of caring people gathered together. Barker parent Chris Intagliata has written that the Barker conference is "a day for coming together in an atmosphere of mutual respect, to learn from and be moved by each other's experience." I hope you will be a part of that experience on March 10th.

## Help Ensure Barker's Future Through Planned Giving

For some time, I had planned to write a column on the concept of "planned giving" (i.e., charitable gifts that require planning in light of the donor's overall estate plan). In the midst of my work, however, my life took an unexpected turn which has greatly influenced what you read today. My mom passed away on January 16, 2007. I am taking the liberty of sharing my personal loss in the hopes that it will encourage the Barker family to do at least one thing—have a written will. If you already have one, great—please review its contents today.

In reflecting on my mom's last few months battling cancer, I am positive she would have wanted me to share these events with you. I will forever cherish the time I spent with her in Hawaii before and after her surgery. To anyone who would listen, my mom would say, "Don't forget to have your mammogram!" She really wanted something useful to come of her own situation. Unfortunately, my mom had some adverse medication reactions and died less than week from the start of therapy. I am glad she was surrounded by most of our family. And like many families, we then faced the immediate question: what *should* we specify in her obituary as recipi-

ents of memorial gifts? OK, we all agreed not to have flowers. But should there be any request in lieu of flowers? What would Mom want? Breast cancer awareness, educational institutions, adoption agencies . . . *many* causes are worthy.

In the weeks after her death, I also had many heart-to-heart talks with my brothers and sisters. To my amazement, none of them has a written will. At some subconscious level, each of them assumed that Grandma would always be there to take care of the grandkids in the event of a tragic loss. In fact, the reality is that 60% of Americans do not have a will at the time of their death. This reality leads me to urge that we must not leave our *most* important decisions to others—first and foremost, the decision of how our children and grandchildren will be cared for in our absence. But we also should think about the institutions in our lives that are carrying out the missions in which we believe.

You have all heard the saying, "There are only two things certain in life: death and taxes." Yet, where death and taxes overlap—in planned giving—so few people consider the issue. For example, only about 8% of wills list a charity. Thus in closing, I urge you to reflect on and

make the decisions regarding your estate. Please consult with your lawyer, family members, confidantes, and also avail yourself of the countless online resources to learn what is best for *you and your family*. I hope this discussion helps you reflect on the issues that are important to you in life, including what Barker has meant to you and your family. You or your family attorney are invited to call The Barker Foundation office and ask to speak with our Executive Director or our development staff.

In closing, thank you for allowing me to share a little about my mom. She was a very special woman, and I will miss her.

Ted Mashima  
Development Office



# FANA Celebrates 35th Anniversary

Blessed by four days of sunny skies and perfect temperatures, Fundación Para la Asistencia de la Niñez Abandonada (FANA), a private non-profit orphanage located on Bogotá's outskirts, celebrated its 35th Anniversary with festive dinners, tours, and a Holy Mass. Adoptive families and adoption professionals gathered from all over the world to participate in the many planned activities. The Barker Foundation has partnered

with FANA since 1978 and was represented at the celebration by Executive Director, Marilyn Regier, and by Director of Family & Post-Adoption Services, Mary Kurfess. A very special guest was the First Lady of Colombia, Lina Moreno de Uribe.

The centerpiece events, a Holy Mass and an outdoor lunch and party, were held on the actual anniversary date of February 4. It was on that date in 1972 that

Mercedes de Martinez and her mother went to the Ministry of Justice to receive FANA's Legal Recognition Resolution. In remembering the sweep of years, Mercedes reflected that for her and her family, "it has truly been a privilege to devote all of these years with determination, commitment and devotion to this task that has fulfilled our lives with peace and serenity." Through dedicated work, FANA and the Hogar have cared for 12,686 children and 8,426 mothers over the past 35 years. Four adoptive families were also overjoyed to receive their children in a ceremony after the Mass.

Guests were greeted by Mercedes and her husband Arturo, as well as by daughters María Lucía and Elena and her husband Cesar; by Flor Angela Rojas; María Teresa de Maldonado; and many others who have been passionate and influential in the work of FANA and the Marguerite D'Youville home for mothers. Barker's official representative, María Teresa de Perez, who has assisted so many of our adoptive families and heads up Barker's Colombian Office, also participated in the anniversary celebration.



Mercedes de Martinez greets the guests at the celebration luncheon on February 4. Mary Kurfess and Marilyn Regier offered their congratulations on behalf of Barker and Friends of FANA DC.

Mercedes de Martinez enjoys the spirited crowd under the tented reception.



## Join Us for Barker's Third Homeland Tour to Colombia

If you have children between the ages of 13 and 21 who were adopted through FANA, the time may be right for your family to visit FANA and Bogotá. Barker's 2007 Colombia Homeland Tour is scheduled for July 7-15, and will include a tour of FANA as well as an individual meeting there with a social worker. In addition, our families will have opportunities to experience Colombia's rich culture, touring Bogotá, visiting the Salt Cathedral, galleries, and open-air markets.

The Tour is designed as a family trip, with parents accompanying their children, and past participants have found the trip to be most memorable. The Prieston family

summarized the experience: "Our kids immediately connected with the other kids in our group, and it was great to see all the kids together sharing their heritage. Our family was unanimous that Homeland Tour 2005 was the best trip we've ever taken."

This year's Tour Leaders are Susan Branco-Rodriguez, Mary Kurfess, and Angela Willmore, and they will also lead the orientation/preparation for the tour. If you would like more information about Barker's 2007 Colombia Homeland Tour, please contact Mary Kurfess at [mkurfess@barkerfoundation.org](mailto:mkurfess@barkerfoundation.org) or telephone 301-664-9664 and request a Homeland Tour information/application packet. ■

A second celebration is planned from August 10-12 to accommodate the families and agencies who were unable to participate in February. We hope for a wonderful representation from Barker and Friends of FANA DC families ([www.friendsoffana.org](http://www.friendsoffana.org)).

Reservations for La Fontana Hotel and the adjacent Plenitud Apartments can be made by emailing Santiago McCausland of Friends of FANA/Colombia at [santimac@tecniconsulta.com](mailto:santimac@tecniconsulta.com). Interested families are advised to make reservations as early as possible. If you hope to attend, please also notify our International Program Assistant, Emily Klotzman, at [eklotzman@barkerfoundation.org](mailto:eklotzman@barkerfoundation.org). ■

## Maxine B. Baker Retires

The Board and Staff of The Barker Foundation extend warmest wishes to Maxine B. Baker upon her retirement as the President and CEO of The Freddie Mac Foundation, and Vice-President of Community Relations. Maxine announced her retirement in December after 25 years of distinguished service, where she served in many important capacities at Freddie Mac. In her recent years with the Foundation, she played a major role in developing our community's philanthropic program and was known as "a champion of children." In November, Maxine also received the 2006 Mother of the Year award for the District of Columbia. Maxine is the parent of two daughters adopted through Barker, and she has inspired our Barker community and made an impact in so many ways. We congratulate her and wish her joy and health in the next chapter of her life.



# Tina Ji Joins The Barker Foundation Staff as Director of International Programs

The Barker Foundation has announced the appointment of Tina Ji as Director of International Programs. Ms. Ji, who became Director on January 3, 2007, brings broad and deep experience to her new position. She graduated from Peking University in 1989 with her law degree and received her LLM from the University of Virginia's School of Law in 1999. She has worked in the adoption field since 1992, first with Children's Hope International in St. Louis, and for the past ten years with Families Thru International Adoption. FTIA is a non-profit child-placing agency focused exclusively on international adoption, and licensed in

Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Kentucky.

At FTIA, Ms. Ji first helped establish the agency's China program in 1995. In 2002, she was appointed Assistant Director of the Agency, and in 2006 added a second role as Director of Programs. In her ten years with FTIA, the agency enjoyed tremendous growth, placing over 400 children into adoptive homes last year (including 250 from China and 125 from Guatemala). She has been responsible for overseeing the operation of all FTIA's current programs, including Brazil, China, Guatemala, India, Russia, and Vietnam. Ms. Ji has also been instrumental in placing several hundred special

needs children from China during her tenure at FTIA.

Finally, Ms. Ji also developed humanitarian programs in China. In 2001 she started a foster care program in China which trains foster parents to care for up to 100 children in non-institutional settings. She has also led efforts to help many orphanages improve conditions for the children, including provision of medical care.

Executive Director Marilyn Regier noted that she has "known and admired Tina's international adoption and humanitarian work for over a decade, and we very much look forward to working with her. The field of international adoption currently faces many challenges, and we are fortunate to have Tina's expertise as we adapt to current realities." In accepting the position, Tina responded: "I consider it a privilege to have the opportunity of working with a wonderful organization like Barker. It is my hope that I could assist Barker in nurturing its international programs with the best of my



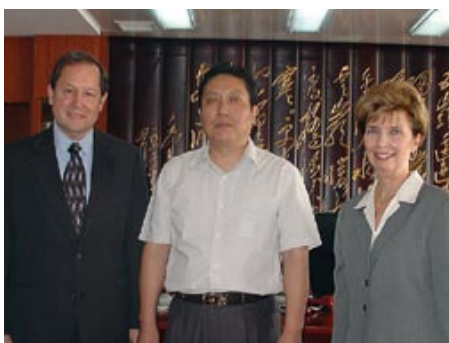
knowledge and experience. I look forward to working with all of the Barker families."

At Barker, Ms. Ji will be responsible for oversight of our six current international programs, as well as for exploration and development of new ones. She is active with the Joint Council on International Children's Services and has also been substantially involved in the Hague Treaty and compliance issues for U.S. agencies.

Tina and her family recently relocated from Indiana. We welcome her, as well as her husband Joshua, and children Emma and Aidan, to the Washington Metropolitan Area and to our Barker community. Tina may be contacted at [tji@barkerfoundation.org](mailto:tji@barkerfoundation.org). ■



The International team works together to facilitate adoptions from various countries, including China, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, India, and Korea. Back row, left to right: International and Post-Adoption Social Worker, Min Lee; Korea Program Assistant, Anjali Singh; International Program Assistant, Emily Klotzman; and Korea Program Coordinator, Susan Hollar. Front row, left to right: International Program Coordinator, Carolina Kenrick, and Director of International Programs, Tina Ji.



Director-General Lu Ying of the CCAA greets Drs. Darrel and Marilyn Regier in China in September. The Barker Foundation was the first U.S. agency to visit the China Center of Adoption Affairs in its new headquarters in Beijing.

## WITH APPRECIATION

The Barker staff expresses sincere appreciation to Jennifer Hammer's Study Group for donation of a digital Nikon single-lens camera and accessories. So often there have been times where we wished for a camera on-site, and now through this thoughtful donation, Barker has a state-of-the-art camera. The Study Group's members are Nonie Akman, Kate Coopersmith, Liz Flower, Marian Forte, Jan Gandal, Ann Humphrey, Rhonda Panzera, Joanna Phinney, Judy Raak, and Patti Ravenscroft. What follows is an excerpt from Marian Forte's letter on behalf of the group:

"Jennifer loved Barker and contributed much—hosting new-mother teas, chairing the annual auction, and participating in post-adoption activities. She was a charter member of our Study Group that began meeting as a Barker-sponsored parenting class that Jan Gandal organized in 1987. We treasured Jennifer's honesty, her generosity, her open-hearted laugh that included us all in her love of life.

Jennifer was an avid photographer whose joyful, fun-loving spirit was reflected in the hundreds of beautiful pictures she took of her family and friends. Using photos to share love, bring families together, and mark special times in family lives was dear to Jennifer's heart. The gift of a camera Barker can use to record a new generation of happy connections seems a wonderful way to remember Jennifer's legacy."

# Social Welfare Society Visits Barker

Social Welfare Society (SWS) President, Lee, Seung Hwan, visited The Barker Foundation in December, in order to explain to our staff some of the changing adoption regulations in Korea. He

was accompanied by Ms. Sun, Hei Kyoung, Director of Intercountry Adoption; and Mrs. Gwak, Ju Yeong, Intercountry Adoption Social Worker. While the new regulations are intended to promote in-country

adoption, President Lee also continues to strongly support international adoptions. President Lee expressed this position in a recent article published in *A Love Nest*, the quarterly publication of SWS, which is now available on the Web at [www.sws.or.kr/e-madang.php](http://www.sws.or.kr/e-madang.php).

After productive meetings with our staff, the delegation enjoyed sightseeing in Washington, a lunch and reception, and a dinner hosted by Barker Board Chair, John Harris. Sue Hollar, our Korea Coordinator, planned the events surrounding the visit, assisted by Anjali Singh and Beth Kirby. Ted Mashima, Development Director, assisted in guiding the delegation, and Min Lee, International Social Worker, served as translator wherever needed. The visit helped



Barker Board of Trustees' member, Dr. Andrea Brenner, and son Caleb, greet President Lee and Ms. Sun at a reception.



Pictured from left to right are staff members of Social Welfare Society and of The Barker Foundation: Mrs. Gwak, Ju Yeong; Ms. Sun, Hei Kyoung; Marilyn Regier; President Lee, Seung Hwan; Michelle Costello Howard; Sue Hollar; and Min Lee.

to strengthen the already-strong relationship between Barker and SWS. Please contact Sue Hollar at [shollar@barkerfoundation.org](mailto:shollar@barkerfoundation.org) for more information concerning our Korean program.

Also, if you wish to receive *A Love Nest* electronically, you can simply send an email to [pkhappy@sws.or.kr](mailto:pkhappy@sws.or.kr) to request that your name be added to the distribution list. ■

—Sue Hollar, Korea Program Coordinator

# PWNL Educates Families on Older Child Adoption

The Barker Foundation is pleased to announce that it has received a \$100,000 grant from the Freddie Mac Foundation in support of Project Wait No Longer (PWNL), continuing its commitment to the project now in its second year. “The Freddie Mac Foundation invests in programs that improve the lives of foster children and help find them permanent loving homes,” said Ralph F. Boyd, chairman of the Freddie Mac Foundation. “The need to find these homes becomes more urgent as children grow older and are at risk for aging out of the system. That’s why we are proud to be supporting the Barker Foundation’s innovative work, and even more excited that our community’s children will be benefiting from it.”

Freddie Mac’s support will enable the program to provide targeted community outreach to identify diverse and capable resource families in MD, VA and

DC, in addition to comprehensive training, home studies and life-long post-adoption services.

Providing quality education for families on the path to adopting an older child from the foster care system is one of PWNL’s primary goals. Historically, the lack of education about the process, and knowing what to expect when parenting children with special needs have left families feeling unprepared, burned out and frustrated in their adoption journey. The Barker Foundation has taken this to heart. Thanks to the generous support of the Carl Freeman Foundation and the George Preston Marshall Foundation, PWNL has developed a workshop series specifically designed for prospective and waiting families to educate them on pertinent issues related to older child adoption such as attachment, childhood challenges and diagnoses, and special education. The series started

in January 2006 with the topic “Navigating the School System and Special Education,” presented by Stacy Lucas, an educator and instructional coach for Fairfax County Public Schools. A workshop in February featured “The Child with Challenges: Exploring diagnoses and interventions,” led by Larry Smith, a clinician who has worked with children in the Washington DC area for over 30 years, including children with Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD). The workshops are facilitated by Nicci Kirlaw, a social worker who joined the PWNL team in November. Her expertise in mental health and facilitating permanency for children has been a proven asset in assisting families through the adoption process. It is our hope that the more educated and connected families feel about expanding their family through older child adoption, the more confident, healthier and happier they will be.

PWNL started in November 2005 as an effort to reduce the overwhelming number of children in the public foster care system, at an estimated 500,000 nationwide. PWNL specifically targets older children who are most difficult to place in permanent homes. Children who are not adopted before they turn 18 age out of the system, at which point they no longer qualify for financial support or a foster family. With the combined resources of both private and public agencies, we can reduce this devastating statistic.

If you are interested in adopting an older child from the foster care system and would like to receive more information about PWNL or about any of the future workshop series, please contact Carol Huttar at 301-664-9664 or [chuttar@barkerfoundation.org](mailto:chuttar@barkerfoundation.org). ■

—Carol Huttar

The Barker Staff bid farewell to **Colleen McLain** at a December party held in her honor. Colleen served for 5 years as Director of International Programs, during which time she played a significant role in the lives of many Barker families. She also coordinated Barker's first two Homeland Tours to Colombia. We wish Colleen the very best in her future endeavors.

**Aimee Sirois** and **Sharae Sharp** have joined the Barker domestic team as birth parent counselors. Together with Melissa New, they provide counseling and support to birth families who are considering adoption.

One of Barker's most active home study consultants, **Becky Halterman**, recently moved to North Carolina with her family, and we wish them all the very best in their new location.

— *With Sympathy* —

We send our heartfelt sympathy to the Littman, Lubin and Miller families, as they mourn the loss of their loved ones. Herman M. Littman, who died on September 26, was the husband of Doris Littman, stepfather of Nancy Brockway and the beloved grandfather of Dylan and Haley Brockway.

Todd Lubin died on January 1, 2007 and is survived by his parents, Charles and Linda Lubin and his sister Jennifer B. Lubin.

Doris Miller, who died on October 11, 2006, is the mother of Doriane Miller and beloved grandmother of Stephanie Miller. Doriane states that her whole family is very grateful to Barker for bringing Stephanie into their lives and forming their family. The energy of a new child in the family gave renewed strength and happiness to Mrs. Miller over the last five years.

The Barker Foundation is most grateful to the Littmans, Lubins and Millers for designating Barker as the memorial gift recipient.



## Congratulations to our New Adoptive Families

### Domestic Placements

Seth and Julie welcomed Eleanor  
 Greg and Melissa welcomed Kaia  
 Clay and Michelle welcomed Sophie  
 Lisa welcomed Emma  
 Michael and Edie welcomed Isabel  
 Pantelis and Cynthia welcomed Charis

Kevin and Jennifer welcomed Maxwell  
 William and Valerie welcomed Cecilia  
 Craig and Tracy welcomed Luke  
 Marquita welcomed Makhailah  
 Eric and Sharon welcomed Joshua  
 David and Mary welcomed Samuel  
 Andy and Sheryl welcomed Molly

Bryan and Michelle welcomed Connor  
 Xan and Cheranne welcomed Kai  
 Rodney and Annie welcomed Malachi  
 David and Michelle welcomed John  
 Daniel and Theresa welcomed Ciara  
 Terri welcomed Catherine

### International Placements

Christopher and Christina welcomed  
 Laura Ann  
 Pascal and Maureen welcomed Nora  
 Robert and Nilanjana welcomed Ava  
 Kurt and Margo welcomed Kira  
 Daniel and Judy welcomed Matthew  
 Bart and Carrie welcomed Mackenzie  
 Neil and Kate welcomed Mia  
 Mark and Donna welcomed Jenna  
 John and Vicki welcomed Janie  
 Laurie welcomed Leah  
 Bezahd and Kamalaseel welcomed Darya  
 Joseph and Erika welcomed Pascal

Scott and Jemima welcomed Benedict  
 Joe and Meredith welcomed Catherine  
 and Elizabeth  
 Rob and Karen welcomed Henry  
 Michael and Anne welcomed Eli  
 Kevin and Lauren welcomed Samuel  
 Thomas and Allison welcomed Margaret Rose  
 John and Joanna welcomed Sara  
 Scott and Amy welcomed Mya  
 John and Monica welcomed Gabriela  
 Raymond and Maureen welcomed  
 Mary Josephine  
 Adam and Robin welcomed Collin  
 John and Kathleen welcomed Peter

Edwin and Alexandra welcomed Benjamin  
 Jeremy and Lisa welcomed Brody  
 Benjamin and Alison welcomed Daniel  
 Charles and Monalisa welcomed Alessandra  
 Jason and Elisa welcomed Lily  
 Richard and Gayle welcomed Kenny  
 Ted and Jessica welcomed Nathaniel  
 Bill and Karen welcomed Mateo  
 Leland and Jennifer welcomed Finley  
 John and Lisa welcomed Jonathan  
 Scott and Susan welcomed home Casey  
 James and Lynn welcomed Elise

# Reflections by Barker Grandparents

Barker grandparents are such an important part of the “Barker family.” They attend our picnics, conferences, and workshops. They volunteer in our offices and are advocates for adoption. Most of all, they love their grandchildren unconditionally. Here are three reflections by Barker grandparents on what adoption has meant to them and their families.

When Annie, one of our two daughters, and her husband Michael, arrived home from Colombia with an adopted 3-month-old infant in November 2000, a noisy throng was at the airport to welcome them. Isaiah peered out from his snuggly with big brown eyes, unfazed by the hullabaloo and delighting the family and friends who awaited him. He fell asleep in my arms outside National Airport as we waited for our car. This was our family’s first plunge into the world of adoption,

as much treasured and appreciated as the spunky Sam, the hopes and expectations the same for both.

Then there’s Eli, adopted from Guatemala last October. This time I wasn’t troubled about connecting with Eli—I was concerned about his connecting with us. After all, he wasn’t a newborn. He had had marvelous foster parents whom he was leaving at the vulnerable age of 10 months, and he was facing a new language, new surroundings. We all anticipated a long period of adjustment. Again, we gathered at the airport, this time with Isaiah and Sam among the greeters. Suddenly Annie and Michael appeared with Eli, who calmly took in the scene from his stroller. I waited anxiously for him to cry or pull away as we surrounded him. Instead he beamed and endured clumsy hugs from relatives and laughed at the silly antics of his big brothers. Three months later, he’s a sparkler,

having slipped easily into the busy rhythms of his new life and family.

If this all seems much too rosy, I’m fully aware that luck plays a part in our good fortune and that other adoptive grandparents have had different experiences. I know, too, that Isaiah, Sam and Eli are very young, so the big, big challenges lie ahead.

Still, this international family is an adventure, a revelation not to be missed. And my shoulder is still available for snoozing grandbabies—from anywhere.

—Susan Crowley, Former Barker Trustee and novice adoptive grandmother, Washington, D.C.



Susan and Daniel Crowley enjoy Christmas with their grandsons. Front, left to right: Sam, Eli, and Isaiah.

and I had steeled myself for the possibility of feeling strange about an unknown child arriving from another family, another culture. I was shocked that I had absolutely no such feeling at all. Isaiah felt as good, as right, snoozing on my shoulder—his sweet breath and shiny dark locks against my neck—as my own babies had years before.

In 2002 Annie got pregnant, a wonderful surprise. But I wondered: Would I feel differently toward this baby because he had our blood? Of course one notices the genetic traits in Sam, blond, blue-eyed and tall like his papa. But DNA basically isn’t an issue—the sublime Isaiah is

My granddaughter, Katherine Grace Robinson, is now four years old. That she came into our lives as an adopted infant is a fact that is lost in the pleasure of knowing her. “Kasi’s” curiosity and love of conversation contribute to her apparent ability to quickly learn much of what is presented to her. She is a loving and loveable child. Raising children has been a challenge throughout the ages, we have learned; however, I am pleased to be a part of the “support generation” in raising all of my grandchildren, which includes Kasi.

—Sylvia K. Robinson, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

In 1986, we were thrilled to hear our daughter and son-in-law were planning to adopt. We decided to relocate to the DC area so we could be close to our grandchild. When we first saw Tyler, we couldn’t believe what a beautiful boy he was. We were delighted and promised not to spoil him. We found that promise impossible to keep. We particularly remember his cowboy stage. He called himself, “Texas Ty.” For his third birthday, he had a cowboy party at a park, riding ponies and all. We also remember the time Grandpa went horseback riding with Tyler. Grandpa was worried whether Tyler was old enough to ride, and wouldn’t you know it, it was Grandpa who wound up getting thrown from his horse.

After a few years, we were thrilled all over again to have another precious baby boy whom his parents named Quinn. Quinn and his grandpa share



Katherine (“Kasi”) Robinson loves the chance to spend time with her grandmother, Sylvia. Also pictured are Katherine’s parents, Ed and Cherisse Robinson.

a fondness for trains. The two regularly visit a local railroad station and watch the trains roll in and out. They have been such regulars over the years at a nearby model train store that they are on a first-name basis with the store manager. Quinn has quite the model train collection, which includes a train Grandpa gave him that Grandpa had owned for over 60 years.

Time passes so quickly. The boys are growing up. Tyler is in his first year of college, and Quinn will be starting high school. We feel blessed to have shared so many precious moments with the two most wonderful grandsons in the world. Thank you, Barker, from the bottom of our hearts.

—Russ and Jean Miller, Gaithersburg, MD



Celebrating Tyler’s graduation are, left to right: Bill Wolverton, Jean Miller, Tyler, Quinn, Nancy Wolverton, Russ Miller.

# Save the Date

**Barker Annual Conference**—March 10

**Baby Basics**—March 17

**Teen Weekend**—April 21–22

**Birth Parent Support Group**—March 8; April 12; May 10

**Third Annual Homeland Tour to Colombia**—July 7–15

THE  
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FOUNDATION since 1945

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