

Barker

What a History . . . What a Future!

History came to life amid festive balloons and stars as Barker parents from The First Decade swapped home study stories with Barker parents from The Sixth Decade. The 60th anniversary year drew to a special close with a celebration on Friday night, November 18, at the Army Navy Country Club in Arlington, Virginia. With the theme of “What a History...What a Future,” the event, attended by more than 200 members of The Barker Foundation community, featured a buffet dinner, silent auction and raffle. Many noted the “family reunion” feeling to the evening. Representing the earliest years were guests, Dr. and Mrs. William Perry who first adopted through the agency in 1954, and Nick Lyle, a former board member who introduced himself as “a Barker baby adopted in 1947.” Both the Perrys and Mr. Lyle recall being around the Barkers’ swimming pool in the early years of the agency’s now-storied history.



Guests mingled and enjoyed the “family reunion” feeling of the anniversary event

After dinner and enthusiastic bidding on auction items, Barker board president John Harris welcomed the guests. Former board member, Chris Intagliata, assisted by former board presidents Jim Smith and Margaret O’Byron, delivered a history of

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The dedicated trio who chaired the Anniversary dinner, (l to r) Susan Walker, Eleanor Long, and Maureen Golden, celebrate the conclusion of a memorable evening.





FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The 60th Anniversary year is drawing to a close, and what a remarkable year it has been.

Each of the anniversary events left an indelible impression, from the March Annual Conference featuring Michael Thompson and Neely Tucker, and so generously sponsored by The Freddie Mac Foundation; to the April ribbon-cutting and dedicatory open house of our new headquarters, attended by over 400 supporters; to the best ever family picnic in June; and concluding with the elegant Anniversary Dinner at Army Navy Country Club in November. We are most grateful to the volunteers who planned each event of the milestone year with an extra measure of devotion.

While the year evoked understandable nostalgia, there was also serious reflection and strategizing. As we look to the future, we can envision continued expansion of our domestic adoption program; public-private partnerships such as the one Barker recently forged with Montgomery County Child Welfare Services, so that Barker can assist in finding homes for older foster youth; increased consciousness of our global connections, as we partner with agencies in countries where the need is compelling; and the continued expansion of our post-adoption department, so that all members of the adoption circle have a touchstone over the course of their lives. Undergirding all these goals is the need for Phase Two of our Legacy Campaign, for without a strong endowment, we cannot ensure that this agency will endure for our children and grandchildren.

Barker has served our community for so many decades that one Barker parent observed, "It almost feels like a public trust." I am confident that Barker at 60 is vibrant, healthy, ethical, financially sound, and still passionate about its mission. And while the "61st year" may not have quite the ringing appeal of the "60th year," I invite each of you to recommit your energy and your resources to the task of ensuring that this wonderful organization is there for future generations.

Marilyn Rejcek

Post-Adoption Staff Transitions

Rachel Eidelman, who served as the first Director of Barker's Family and Post-Adoption Services Department, will be moving out of the area in January. Since December 2002, Rachel has brought not only a rich social work background to her efforts, but also creativity, compassion, and her trademark sense of humor.

In tendering her resignation, Rachel noted that when she had the opportunity to help create the new department, she did not "foresee the enormous challenges as well as the considerable sense of satisfaction" that her work would bring. Reflecting that "we have developed a systematic way in which adopted persons, birth parents, and adoptive parents can access the numerous services that Barker offers," Rachel also noted as department accomplishments the "now-regularly scheduled workshops and learning opportunities for all members of the adoption community." She also cited the development of a post-adoption database as "the most challenging accomplishment," one which "will assist the professional staff in delivering the most appropriate and timely services to all of Barker's clients."

Mary Deffley Kurfess will become the new Director February 1, 2006, and is currently working with Rachel to effect a smooth transition for clients. Mary comes with over 20 years of social work experience, and has been a contractor and consultant to the Barker Foundation for the past three years in international and domestic adoption. Her prior social work experience includes adoption and post-adoption services for state and private agencies, and positions with the American Red Cross as the Tracing Coordinator for International Social Services, and as an Associate for Corporate Strategy. Finally, Mary also created and managed the American Red Cross International Family Assistance Program for families affected by the attack on the World Trade Center.

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ANNUAL CONFERENCE MARCH 11, 2006

This year's Annual Conference will again be held at the Shady Grove Conference Center in Rockville, Maryland, on Saturday, March 11, 2006, with the theme: "The Life of Adoption: Rewards, Regrets, Resilience." The featured speaker will be Cheri Register, whose ground-breaking 1991 book—*Are Those Kids Yours?*—a classic for adoptive parents, has now been supplemented with her 2005 publication, a provocative book of essays called *Beyond Good Intentions*. Other featured speakers include Jelani Freeman, who grew up in multiple foster homes and now works in the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services, after having worked with Mayor Anthony Williams and Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton; and Larry Smith, LCSW-C, one of our area's most respected therapists, who will present a breakout session on ADHD and Adoption, as well as lead a discussion on attachment disorders at the professional's luncheon. There will also be panels of young adult adopted persons, birth parents, and a presentation by representatives of our first Homeland Tour to Colombia. Please mark your calendars for March 11th and watch for a brochure in the mail.

SAVE THE DATE 2ND Annual Barker Teen Weekend

for 7th–12th graders
April 7–9, 2006
The 4–H Center
Chevy Chase, Maryland
Supported by a generous grant from the
George Preston Marshall Foundation

Watch for details in the mail!

News and Notes

While the final totals are not in for Barker's Annual Phonathon, it was surely one of our most successful Phonathons in recent years! Our gratitude to Don Longano, Board of Trustees Development Chair, for overseeing the efforts, and for coordinating with PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLP, which made its facility available; to David Sherman, for serving as Chair of the event; to Rob DeLucia, for helping transition the new team; and to Linda Adams, for her incredible efforts in serving as the primary Barker staff coordinator. Thanks also to Sue Culver and Kimberly Watkins for their strong support, and to Tom Merkel of Bradley Food and Beverage and to La Madeline for delicious donations to nourish our volunteer callers. And finally, thank you to the many volunteers who made the calls! We couldn't have done it without all of you!

We welcome Ana Matheus to our domestic department. Ana works as a birth parent counselor and will provide significant outreach to the Latino community.

Best wishes to Dionne Johnston, post-adoption social worker and birth parent counselor, who begins maternity leave on December 9.

Welcome to Jenny Garlets Martinez, who will cover Dionne's post-adoption responsibilities in the short run, and will also become program director for our Korea program as of January 1st.

Special thanks to Dr. Andrea Brenner of American University, for providing Barker with some wonderfully talented volunteers from several sociology classes.

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Barker's Barker What a History...What a Future

six decades of service, prompting audience members to acknowledge their own part in that history through a show of hands at key times during the retrospective.

Before setting the stage for the future by highlighting goals for the coming years, Executive Director Marilyn Regier honored the past, and recognized the contributions of former Executive Director Robin Allen, who was in attendance. In closing, Marilyn thanked those who were present and observed that while the Barker Foundation “is sometimes a fragile enterprise, it has also proven remarkably resilient, and tonight we herald your stewardship, your tenacity and grit, your generosity, and your love, which emanate from a belief in our core mission, that every child has the right to a permanent, loving home.” The program concluded with the Barker tradition of a heart-tugging slide show set to music, featuring many members of the community present at the event.

A wind-and-string quartet which included Barker parents Martha Goldstein and Denise Wilkinson, provided lovely music during the evening. Rob DeLucia and Kamal Ali emceed various portions of the evening with charm and wit. The 60th anniversary celebration dinner, which was co-chaired by Barker parents Maureen Golden, Eleanor Long, and Susan Walker, raised over \$20,000 for the agency.

Chris Intagliata reflects enjoyment as Jim Smith narrates a portion of the Six Decades' retrospective.



Bill Kennard, Kamal Ali, and Bob Long chat with Barker grandparents, Duff and Mary Green (Eleanor Long's parents)

Barker Homeland Tour 2005

By Colleen McLain

The Barker Foundation has been working in Colombia, specifically with FANA, since 1978, and it has been a long-held dream that we would begin sponsoring Homeland tours. These trips bring adopted persons and their families back to the country of the child's birth—usually for the first time since the adoption took place. In August of 2005, we were thrilled to see that dream become a reality, as three Barker staff members joined twenty-one other people for an amazing eight-day trip to Colombia.

The trip actually began weeks earlier as we met for the first time as a group here in Bethesda. It was important to talk about everyone's expectations for the trip and begin preparing for such an emotional journey. Rachel Eidelman, Director of Post-Adoption and Family Services, and Colleen McLain, Director of International Programs, met with the parents, while Susan Branco-Rodriguez, one of our contract workers, met with the adopted persons. Susan was also adopted from Colombia, and the participants quickly developed a rapport with her. Susan felt the tour “allowed the adopted persons to find more valuable pieces of what makes them the individuals they are. These pieces included their cultural history, their birth family information, and the physical traits and characteristics that identify them as Colombian persons. Most

importantly they experienced this in the loving and supporting presence of their parents and siblings.”

On August 1, we all made our way to Bogotá, some of us rendezvousing at the Atlanta airport for the last leg of the trip. Families came from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, and the “kids” ranged in age from 11 to 20 years old. The trip included one very full, very special day at FANA—for many noted as the highlight of the trip—where our group was able to participate in the presentation of a baby to a family from France. The parents in our group were transported back to each of their own presentation days, and the youth felt honored to have such an important role in the creation of one more family. Flor Angela Rojas took time to meet with each family individually and was able to share precious information from the file with each child. Our group also made our own presentation that day since—through the generosity of the Homeland Tour participants, Friends of FANA DC, and additional money from The Barker Foundation—we had raised funds to sponsor a new computer room at FANA for the older children. Elena Martinez responded, “Our kids are thrilled with their new acquisition. Thank all of you again for this generous donation that our kids and FANA staff will enjoy greatly!”

We spent a day touring Bogotá, and learning so much about the history of Bogotá, and Colombia, thanks to a wonderful tour guide. Of course, no trip would be complete without some shopping, so we took time to learn about emeralds and leather—two major exports of Colombia, and many brought some of each back to the

US to help remember the trip.

That evening, we had a terrific dinner at Carbon de Palo, and were fortunate to have Maria Teresa Maldonado and Flor Angela Rojas join



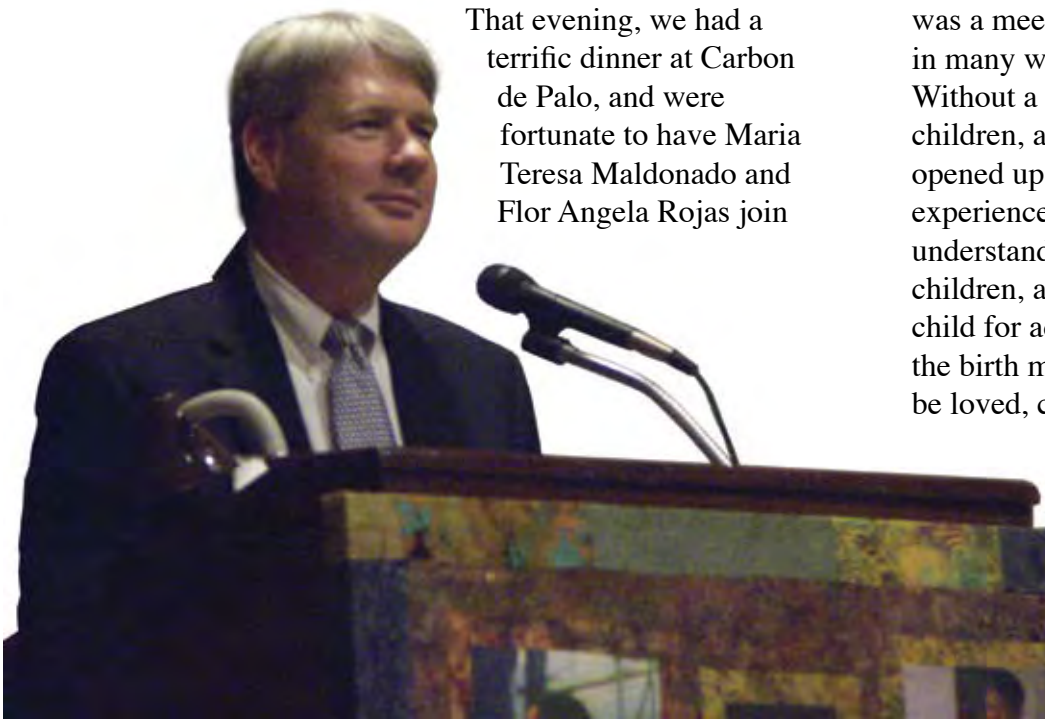
Elena Martinez helps one of the FANA children cut the ribbon as they inaugurate the computer room donated by Barker, the Homeland tour participants, and Friends of FANA DC

us for food, conversation and fun! Although Mercedes de Martinez was unable to join us during the tour, she called us daily to make sure our group was doing well.

The last day in Bogotá was another emotional one, as our group toured the Hogar, or birth mother home. Following a tour given by Maria Lucia Martinez, we had hoped to have the chance to meet with one or two birth mothers. Imagine our surprise when we learned that 17 birth mothers were willing to meet with us! It was a meeting that we’d prepared for, but that in many ways, is impossible to prepare for. Without a dry eye in the room, the parents, children, and birth mothers shared questions and opened up to each other about their adoption experiences. The birth mothers helped everyone understand just how much they love their children, and how hard the decision to place a child for adoption really is. The parents helped the birth mothers to trust that their children will be loved, cherished, and honored by all of the

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John Harris, President of the Barker Board of Trustees, welcomed over 200 guests to the anniversary dinner



Annual Holiday Party for Foster Parents

Beth Kirby and Eliza Niemann coordinated a fun-filled holiday party on December 4th to thank Barker's wonderful foster parents. Held at the Regiers' home, the evening featured delicious food generously donated and catered by Barker parent Patti Pukatch, as well as the traditional gift-giving and receiving. Several of the children in care were also present. Jim and Donna Johnston, who took turns holding their foster baby, amazed guests with the revelation that they have now cared for 64 babies!

Our roster this year includes three new foster families: Charles and Sherry Bergman; Speros and Anne Colevas; and Don and Joyce Hartman. They join our other dedicated families: Pierre and Darlene Asmar; Chris and Marilyn Brennan; Kieth and Dana Buswell; Joseph and Cathy Fiorillo; Jim and Donna Johnston; Phil and Loretta McGee; David and Robin Megel; Alan and Alison Reiter; and George and Donna Wolohojian.

Beth Kirby, Foster Care Coordinator, summed up the remarkable contribution of our foster families: "We are so fortunate to have such an incredible and dedicated group. Their love for children shines at each placement, and we are thankful for their commitment to Barker, the birth parents, the adoptive parents, and especially to all the children who pass through their doors."



Eliza Niemann prepares to distribute holiday gift bags at foster parents' party. Looking on eagerly are seated (l to r) Alison Reiter, Sue Culver, Sher Bergman and Alan Reiter. Standing in background are Glen Culver, Beth Kirby, and Joyce Hartman.



On behalf of the Barker Foundation, Marilyn Regier accepts Angel in Adoption Award from U.S. Rep. Chris Van Hollen

Barker Honored as Congressional Angel in Adoption

The Barker Foundation has been selected by U.S. Representative Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) as one of this year's Congressional Angels in Adoption™. On September 13, 2005, Marilyn Regier and Eliza Niemann represented Barker at a national ceremony held in Washington, D.C. hosted by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI).

Dr. Regier, Executive Director of The Barker Foundation, acknowledged the award: "In this, our 60th anniversary year, we are especially honored and pleased to be nominated by Congressman Van Hollen and recognized by the CCAI for the Barker Foundation's long history of comprehensive adoption services to our community. We look forward to many more years of being at the cutting edge of adoption practice, and of making a difference in children's lives."

CCAI is a non-partisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to raising congressional and public awareness about the tens of thousands of foster children in this country and the millions of orphans around the world in need of permanent, safe, and loving homes; and to eliminating the barriers that hinder these children from realizing their need of a family. The Angels in Adoption™ program was created in 1999 to raise public awareness of the many different ways that committed individuals can help children and families through adoption.

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Barker Homeland Tour 2005

members of the adoptive family, and that the children will grow up knowing something about the birth mother. The children made us all so proud that day as they thanked the birth mothers for their sacrifice and assured them that they each love their own birth mothers and are not angry about the decision made to place them for adoption. Each person said exactly what we as professional staff say each day to our clients, but I know that it had a much different impact coming directly from each member of the adoption circle.

After Bogotá, it was a change of venue as we traveled to Cartagena to enjoy a few days in the sun and see another part of Colombia. We felt it was important to give the group a chance to decompress a bit and really have some time to process some of what they experienced in Bogotá. We were able to relax, do some more sightseeing, and at the end, had a farewell luncheon before flying back to Bogotá and then on to our individual destinations.

Six weeks after our trip, we met up again for a “reunion” here in Bethesda. We were able to share pictures, and more importantly, continue processing all the feelings that bubbled forth as a result of the trip. The Prieston family gave voice to what all the participants seemed to feel: “We have traveled quite a bit as a family to some rather exciting places in the world, but our family was unanimous that Homeland Tour 2005 was the best trip we’ve ever taken.”

Flor Angela Rojas of FANA noted that it was “a



Flor Angela Rojas with all the “kids” at a celebratory dinner in Bogotá



Barker Foundation Homeland Tour participants gather on the steps of FANA, preparing to enter FANA on day of our trip

wonderful and rewarding experience to have the Homeland Tour group visiting FANA. For FANA’s team, including myself, it is great to have our FANA’s children back and see how well they are doing, and all the wonderful opportunities they have being part of loving and caring families.” And Rachel Eidelman summarized well the feelings of our Barker team: “The Homeland Tour to Colombia was certainly one of the highlights of my professional experience in adoption. The staff was given an extraordinary chance to witness Colombia through the eyes of the children and their parents. I believe that the unanticipated opportunity for our group to meet with the young women in the Hogar [the Marguerite D’Youville Home] was remarkable for all of the participants. I will always appreciate the opportunity that the families gave us to share in their experiences.”

We are already busy planning for the 2006 Homeland Tour, which is now scheduled for July 1–10, 2006. For more information, please contact Colleen McLain at: cmclain@barkerfoundation.org.

Barker announces a new program: “Project Wait No Longer: Permanency for Foster Youth,” made possible through the generous support of The Freddie Mac Foundation. Are you interested in making a difference in the life of an older child who needs a loving adoptive home? Please email Eliza Niemann: eniemann@barkerfoundation.org

Congratulations to our New Adoptive Families

International Placements:

Cynthia welcomed Isabella
Rajesh and Tracy welcomed Karina
Roger and Mary welcomed Willa
Reas and Diane welcomed Olivia
Jonathan and Karen welcomed Abraham
Jacob and Sheri welcomed Cruz
Paul and Kalpana welcomed Riya
Nielson and Jo welcomed Carlos
Thomas and Jane welcomed Carolyn
Patrick and Susan welcomed Cameron
Devashis and Alya welcomed Kareena

Alan and Leanne welcomed Daniel
Andrew and Eileen welcomed Juan Carlos
Sreekanth and Vasanthi welcomed Karen
April welcomed Annie
Gerard and Belkis welcomed Kevin
Robert and Eiko welcomed Robert
Jean-Pierre and Patricia welcomed Natalie
Kirk and Ellen welcomed Evelyn
David and Kathy welcomed Sarita
Naresh and Jennifer welcomed Ria

Domestic Placements

Scott and Sharon welcomed Grace
Daniel and Joanne welcomed Lucas
Albert and Terri welcomed Keira
Mark and Tawnya welcomed David
Andrew and Lynne welcomed Madison
Damon and Eboni welcomed Danielle
Louis and Deidre welcomed Trey
Timothy and Anna welcomed Benedict
Rick and Connie welcomed Thomas
Randall and Aurelie welcomed Anthony

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Post-Adoption Staff Transitions

In accepting the position, Mary stated: "I am delighted to join the Barker staff. . .I have seen first-hand the exceptional level of experience, commitment, and compassion that every member of the Barker staff brings to this work. Barker has a strong tradition of both innovation and stability. The creation in 2003 of the Department of Family and Post-Adoption

Services reflects that tradition, in that it is at once pioneering and dependable, providing strong support in the ongoing relationship between the agency and the Barker families. I am excited and especially pleased to work at Barker in this important area of the adoption field, and to continue to develop the family and post-adoption services which Rachel Eidelman has so capably overseen and initiated."



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