

## A Family of Five Forever

In the fall of 2006 my husband and I made the choice to adopt. After much research we decided upon an international adoption, mainly due to my fears regarding a domestic one. I had seen far too many bad movies and read too many heartbreaking articles concerning adoptive children being legally removed from their new homes to be comfortable with that option.

Having chosen a country and an out of state adoption agency with ties there, we then began our search for a local agency to perform our home study. With a recommendation to try Chrysalis House we made the decision to attend an informational meeting they were having in January of 2007.

The first two families to speak discussed their foreign and domestic adoptions. The third family had recently adopted three siblings from Shasta County through the foster/adopt program. They spoke so highly of their experience, both with the foster/adopt program and Chrysalis House, that my husband and I decided to go with Chrysalis as our agency and to look into the foster/adopt program.

After talking to others who successfully adopted children from the program, many from Shasta County, we chose to pursue this option instead of an international adoption. We also decided to adopt a sibling pair instead of a single child. After taking a few months to remodel our home, we began to seriously pursue the adoption in September of 2007. The process was completed in early February when Stephanie, our social worker, performed our Home Study. Although I had been dreading this part of the process she made it so easy and comfortable for us.

I will never forget the conversation we had with her when she finished the study. We were sitting at the dining room table when she asked if we would ever consider adopting three siblings. My husband and I looked at each other and shared one of those silent moments of communication that sometimes occur between spouses then we turned to Stephanie and said, "yes". It just seemed so natural and right.

We spent the next week looking through the profiles giddy with the thought of finding "our" children. We read the overview of 3 children we found to be adorable

and let Stephanie know we were interested in them. Two days later we attended a family fair outside of San Francisco where we spoke to the sibling's social worker and found out they had already been placed.

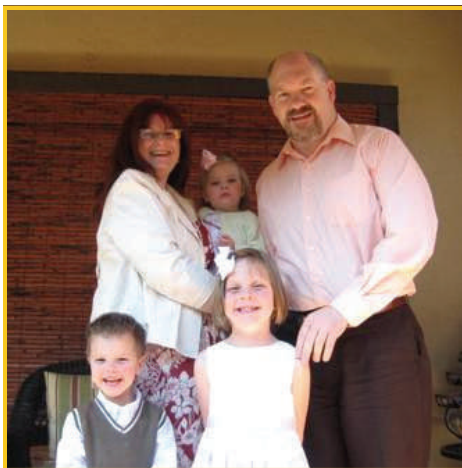
I was extremely disappointed but my husband reminded me that adoption was a process that took time. Peggy and Stephanie cautioned me not to expect it to happen overnight. One week later we were sent the profiles of three more siblings, minus photographs, and decided these children would be a good fit for our family. Stephanie contacted their social worker in Shasta County

and that weekend we made the 5 hour trip to meet them. The moment we met all five of us seemed to know it was meant to be. The kids responded to us so naturally and their foster mom and one of their social workers felt we were doing so well they should spend the night with us in our hotel.

The weekend was a huge success and we left, very reluctantly, knowing these were OUR children. Over the next two weeks we phoned them every night, e-mailed them through their wonderful foster mom and sent photos. It was the longest two weeks of our lives. When the next weekend came we made the return trip to be with our kids. When

we picked them up they were ecstatic to see us and their foster mom told us they had obviously missed us. She also said she didn't know how they would react to our leaving.

The night before we were scheduled to leave I knew I couldn't leave them, especially since our 4 year old son had undergone outpatient surgery that morning and didn't want me out of his sight. That evening their foster mom told me she had spoken to their social workers. She told them she felt the kids were ready to be with us and, in her opinion, were going to be harmed by our leaving. She urged me to call and talk to them as well. I did and asked if we could possibly bring them home sooner than the three months they had told us it would take. I was told they would discuss the matter with their supervisor and we could talk about it the next morning at our scheduled meeting.



***"The moment we met all five of us seemed to know it was meant to be."***

## Exciting Additions at Chrysalis House, Inc.

Busy, busy, busy! It's always an exciting challenge for us to keep up with the many changes in the adoption world.

We are excited to announce the opening of our Clinical Services program. Chrysalis House, Inc. is now offering our families post adoption counseling services. Additionally, we are excited to announce that Stephanie Bracamonte, licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, is spearheading the program. Most of you will remember Stephanie as an adoption social worker, providing home study, monitoring and post-placement services to our families. Stephanie has many years of experience in working with children, particularly surrounding adoption issues. Please call our office with any questions or to inquire about scheduling.

As part of our Clinical Services, Stephanie will continue to run our monthly Adoption Support Group. I encourage those who have not had a chance to do so to attend this free event. You will be welcomed by our staff, other adoptive families and prospective adoptive families to connect over adoption related issues and discussions. Please contact Erin in our office for detailed information.

Additionally, we have recently added Evie Vasquez to the CHI staff as a Matching Coordinator.

She will be responsible for connecting our Foster/Adopt families with county social workers to match them with children. Evie has already hit the ground running using her wonderful personality and experience to build relationships with the counties we work with. She is a great addition to the Chrysalis House family.

On the international front, we are excited to announce the opening of our Kazakhstan international program. Chrysalis House, Inc. was recently awarded accreditation to conduct adoptions from Kazakhstan. Chrysalis House, Inc. is one of only 32 agencies that were granted this privilege. For the facilitation of this program we are working in tandem with God's Waiting Children. You may recall another close partnership between God's Waiting Children and Chrysalis House, Inc. to provide international adoption services for Ukraine. The addition of Kazakhstan to our agency will deepen our partnership with God's Waiting Children, as we continue to enjoy working with this agency.

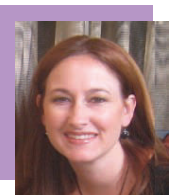
On behalf of our staff I wish you and your family all of the very best for a joyous holiday season and a wonderful 2009.

*-Lanny Knight, MSW*

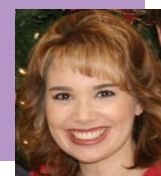
## Meet Our Newest Board Members



Lee Ann and Mark Pearce joined the Chrysalis House Board of Directors in August. They are both very pleased to be working with Chrysalis House with the goal of helping make more families as happy as their own. The Pearce family was expanded to include two wonderful children in late 2006. Marina is now 8 and Mario is 6. The Pearce Family came together through Chrysalis House and the Foster to Adopt program. Marina is in third grade enjoying choir, basketball and softball. Mario is in first grade enjoying t-ball and bicycle riding. The Pearce's reside in Templeton, CA. Lee Ann and Mark both work for Farm Credit West.



My name is Stacey Cross. My boys are my life: my husband, Scott, my son Nathan who is 5 ½, and my youngest son Alexander who is almost 3. Adoption is an important part of who we are as a family. As adoptive parents, Scott and I had the privilege of being present at both our boys' births. We are grateful that adoption has brought our family together. Two years ago, I decided on a change and opened a private preschool, The Growing Patch, with my sister. This has turned out to be a very rewarding experience. The best part is that I get to be with my own kids, whether at the preschool, when they're sick, or just because. I look forward to continuing to be part of the CHI family as I feel strongly about the importance of their work and the meaningful message they are sharing with the community.



Christina Toste has joined our Board of Directors in August of 2008. She brings a plethora of fundraising experience and a desire to serve future prospective adoptive parents. The Toste family has been very generous to Chrysalis House, Inc. over the past year. Christina is a pharmacist for Children's Hospital Central Valley and she and her husband are co-owners of a family dairy. Christina is also a strong advocate for adoption. She and her husband are the adoptive parents of an adorable 2 year old, Andrew, from the foster care system. The Tostes also have an 11 year old son, Jacob. She and her husband, Scott, and sons currently reside in Fresno County.



Tisha McDonald and her husband, Chad, are the adoptive parents of Sloan (6), from Russia, and Kensington (1 1/2), from China. This family has a heart for adoption. Tisha is a former District Attorney and is currently employed by Gary McDonald Homes. However, she is primarily an at-home parent. She enjoys reading, weekly bible studies, spending time with friends and family and working out in her spare time. She is also active in other community organizations. Tisha and her husband are strong advocates for adoption and are always eager to share both of their adoption experiences with prospective adoptive parents. Tisha is a great addition to the CHI board not only as a professional and parent but as a woman who has a passion for adoption.

## Chrysalis House, Inc. Annual Picnic

Mark your calendars for **Saturday, May 2, 2009** for our Annual Picnic. Enjoy plenty of food, games, raffles, and a large silent auction. Catch up with our staff and connect with other adoptive parents and their children. Come help us raise funds for our agency to apply for full Hague Accreditation— **our goal is \$10,000**. More details about this event will go out next year.

Do you have an auction item you'd like to donate? Contact our office if you'd like to donate any items or services for the silent auction. Remember— Chrysalis House is a 501-C non-profit organization and **all donations** are tax-deductable!



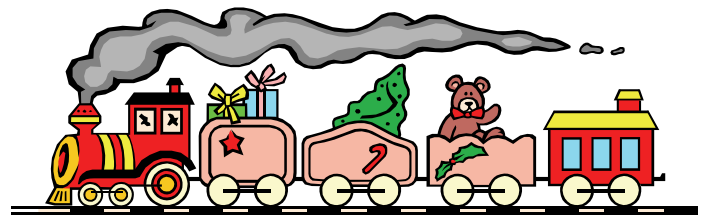
### CHI Adoption Support Group

Our Support Group meets on the second Tuesday night of each month and are **FREE** for all CHI families, no matter their stage of adoption. Onsite childcare is available for \$5 per child. Adoption related topics are discussed and vary each month. Check our website for detailed information about the next meeting.

If you'd like to receive an e-mail reminder each month with the information please e-mail Erin at [erin@chrysalishouse.com](mailto:erin@chrysalishouse.com).

### Our agency will be closed on:

November 27th— Thanksgiving  
November 28th— Thanksgiving  
December 25th— Christmas  
January 1st— New Year's  
January 19th— MLK Day  
February 16th— President's Day



## Thank You for Your Support

Thank you to those families to have contributed to our agency in the 2008 year! Specific items and monetary donations help our agency better serve all of our families and their children. We are a 501-C non-profit organization, and all donations are tax-deductible. Chrysalis House, Inc. would like to thank the following families for their generous donations.:

**Somera \* Ramirez \* Knight \* Gardner \* Davey \* Fine \* Tucker \* McFarlane \* Schulz \* Edwards  
Thornton \* Reed \* Fundraising Solutions \* Funding Factory \* Kormarketing**

### Our Wish List:

- \* **Funds** (Donate online to Chrysalis House through an encrypted secure connection to PayPal!)
- \* **Hague Accreditation Funding**
- \* **New Telephone System**
- \* **Wireless Telephone Headsets**
- \* **Filing Cabinets** (Metal Vertical— 4 drawer)
- \* **More Client Chairs**
- \* **Paint Interior Agency Walls**
- \* **Professional Window Washings**
- \* **Redesigned Front Workstation**
- \* **Playroom Toys** (Gently used)





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The next day we arrived at the meeting hoping to be told we could bring them home by the end of March. After giving the social workers a report on our visit we asked when we would be allowed to bring them home. We were shocked to be told we could take them with us that morning. When we asked the children if they wanted to come home with us and be a forever family they screamed yes and started jumping up and down. It was one of the happiest days of our lives.

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, two weeks after meeting our three beautiful children for the first time, we brought them to our home. Eight months later their birth parent's parental rights have been terminated and we are just waiting for the adoption to be finalized. It has been easier, and harder, than we ever expected. The process was a breeze thanks to everyone at Chrysalis House, especially Stephanie, but our adjustment as a family is an ongoing process that has its ups and downs.

We are so very grateful to the staff of Chrysalis House and to Gail and Phonh, our children's social workers in Shasta County, for helping make our dream a reality. All of my fears regarding a foster adoption were baseless and the rewards have been immeasurable. Our family is happy and the bonding process is going well. Our children, Savannah Julianna (7), Stephen Jakob (4  $\frac{3}{4}$ ), and Sophia (2  $\frac{1}{2}$ ) are thriving and coming into their own. We couldn't ask for more.

*-Jonathan and Victoria*

