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Highschool Mission: Trip to Kontum

Nothing succeeds quite so well as Success. Last year Dorinda (TDH) accompanied a group of 8 secondary youth from College Ste-Anne-de-Lachine under the supervision of their teacher, Martin Chavalier. It was a terrific success - so much so, that Dorinda is now, 2010, shepherding 11 more of Martin Chevalier's students from College Ste-Anne plus 11 more from St. Michael's College in British Columbia on another trip. They will be hosted by the Sisters of the Immaculate Medal who run a set of 6 orphanages in the province of Kontum, Vietnam. There are no adoptions from these private orphanages. They will play with the children, work in the rice paddies, learn to winnow rice in the wind, and generally make do with little. It is a learning experience, but a life-changing experience for some of them as well. The group left Vancouver airport on January 3, 2010 and returns on the 18th. Dorinda left a bit earlier, December 28th, and met them in Ho Chi Minh City. We look forward to hearing more upon their return.

More information about Dorinda's trip last year is available at:
http://tdhontario.tdh.ca/articles.html#kontum_report

Brendan Cavanaugh (brendan@tdh.ca)

Vietnam: adoption program

Hélène Parisien (helene@tdh.ca)

Statistics: 4th Quarter - 2009

There have been 5 proposals to Ontario* families between October 1 and December 31, 2009, including 3 boys and 2 girls. Among these 5 children 1 had special needs. 4 children were from Vung Tau and 1 from Ho Chi Minh. Most of the referrals made in this period were to families whose documents went to Vietnam in early 2008.

*includes families in other provinces except Quebec

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TDH Ontario quarterly newsletter

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TDH L'Infolettre Québec

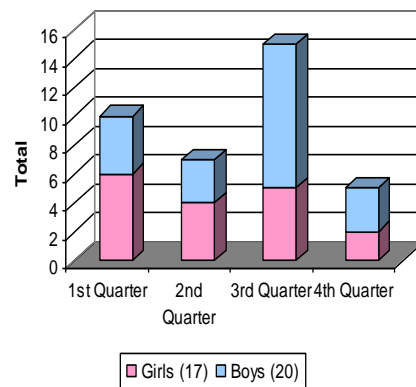
www.tdhpourlesenfants.tdh.ca
 Céline Lalbertie,
 Grégory Pierre,
 Fanny Lasselin
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Referrals - Vietnam

	2008	2009
Vung Tau	18	26
Tra Vinh	4	5
Hoa Binh	5	1
Quang Ninh	1	2
Ho Chi Minh	0	2
Ben Tre	0	0
Go Vap	0	1
non-orphanage	1	0
TOTAL	29	37

Special Needs included:	2	3
Older included:	0	2
Sets of Twins included:	1	2

2009 Referrals - Vietnam



KONTUM: TDH's involvement

TDH has become more involved in Kontum, Vietnam during 2009. Kontum, in the jungled Highlands of mid-Vietnam, is the area where Vietnam placed the aboriginal Vietnamese people, the Banar, in circumstances similar to those of the Canadian and American Indians. Like the Amerinds, many, if not most, of the Banar peoples maintain their primitive village tribal life-style, costume and customs. It was also the site of much of the fighting of the American War, and consequently the area and the Banar themselves remain of interest to many US Vietnam veterans.

Earlier on, following the French Revolution, French missionaries were sent by St. Vincent de Paul to convert the Banar to Catholicism, which they have retained. They also founded a community of religious Banar women, the Sisters of the Miraculous Medal. It is these Sisters who run six orphanages in Kontum for over 700 children. Each is called Vinh San (VS) for (Vincent) I, II, III etc.

There are no adoptions from these private orphanages. About 80% of the children return to farming or tribal village life. The others choose

different life pathways and are supported as needed, a few going on to university.

These Sisters live a very, very simple communal life, praying and working - some in the fields, some at childcare, and some at other supportive tasks - every day - to feed their children. TDH Canada has been helping to provide for these children for two years now. The recent Ketsana typhoon in Kontum wiped out the Sisters' entire crops, smothering them under a heavy layer of mud. The water flooded the farm, rose to the ceilings of the ground level rooms, killed most of the animals, and destroyed just about everything they had.

In response to the dire need, TDH supporters in Quebec and Ontario donated \$35,000 to the relief efforts. As soon as the water receded and the area could be visited, our representative, Thuy, went immediately from Hanoi to the Kontum area to buy and deliver to the orphanages 10 tons of rice. TDH is working with other supporting organizations to coordinate repairs and replenish their livestock and stores. The general consensus is that safe potable water is a primary goal for all six orphanages. We are working on that.

Program Updates:

Ukraine

The Ukraine program continues to run strong in Quebec with many families having already received children, about half of them under the age of three. This is a wonderful opportunity for parents in Ontario too! Be sure to share information about TDH's Ukraine program with anyone considering adoption options.

Ecuador

TDH Ontario has received a license from the Ontario Ministry to work in Ecuador and we are now awaiting a response to our application for accreditation from Ecuador. We hope that a favorable decision will be forthcoming from Ecuador shortly.

Honduras

Just in time for the holidays a happy couple from Quebec returned with their 3 ½ year old daughter.

This program is currently accepting applications from Ontario families, including for special needs. Children available for adoption are usually 1 year or older for couples younger than 40 years, 30 months and up for couples older than 40 years and 4 years and older for couples between 45 and 50 years old.

*For more information on any program please contact:
Manon Parent (manon@tdh.ca)*

Vung Tau Sponsorship Program

My girls and I vacationed in Vietnam last December. We spent a few days in Vung Tau and visited the orphanage, spending time with the staff and the children there. I wanted to help somehow. Together, Mrs. Trang Dai and I discussed the possibility of coordinating a sponsorship program for the orphanage. We have matched about 25 children up to now, and I have recently received 10 "new" children to match to sponsors. Some I have already been able to match.

The suggested donation of \$300 per year goes to the direct care of the children: food, medication, school supplies and clothing. The money that is sent is actually not used only for the sponsored child, but for the benefit of all the children. Mrs. Trang Dai has promised to send news and pictures of the sponsored children once a year. I am confident the sponsors that were matched in February and March of 2009 will soon receive an update. As for gifts for the children, I will ask her again. Given that not all of the children have sponsors (and not necessarily all of the sponsors will be sending gifts) when one child does receive a gift it can seem unfair to the other children and perhaps even uncomfortable for the receiving child. Pictures are always appreciated, appropriate and easily shared. Letters are nice too, but translation can be an issue.

The 2 boys and 8 girls who recently entered the sponsorship program were born between 1995 and 2009. One has cerebral palsy and one has downs syndrome. If you wish to sponsor a child, please contact me.

Thanks for your interest....

Pascale Desautels (apdeso@yahoo.ca)
(adapt. S. Kashino)

Pascale Desautels coordinates the sponsorship program in Vung Tau. Pascale lives near Montreal and has 2 daughters, the first adopted in Vung Tau in December of 2002.

Alongside the opportunity to sponsor an individual child, there is also an opportunity to sponsor the **Vung Tau Children's Protection Center** as a whole. Since the TDH program endeavours to assign a single sponsor to each child (even though the \$300 doesn't cover the annual costs of the child's care), it is suggested that individual child sponsorship only be requested by individuals and families who intend to develop a relationship with that child through regular correspondence (annual photos and short letters) and possibly a visit in Vietnam. Regular program sponsors can also, upon request, be sent annual updates on some of the children who are benefiting from their general sponsorship, without being specifically matched to any one of those children.

Mrs. Trang Dai has said that it provides the children great joy to learn they have a 'family' in Canada (or France or wherever). Twenty-five dollars a month is a small price to pay for bringing such happiness to children who have so little.

To learn more about this sponsorship program email Pascale at:
apdeso@yahoo.ca

Sharon Kashino (sharon@tdh.ca)



Pascale, her two daughters (middle of front row) and some of the children in the sponsorship program. Dec. 2008.

Madame Le: "my happiness is to see them smile"

"Madame Le Thi Le, 3rd Quarter, Hong Ha District, City of Ha long – a chat with journalist Trung Luan from Quang Ninh newspaper"

Her immediate reaction upon hearing of my intent to write an article [about her] for my newspaper is to refuse: "My God, there are plenty of bright people, busy with a variety of jobs, why not write about them? Why do you want to write about me, an old woman who spends her time taking care of children...?" I smile, pointing to the child in her arms and say "my dear, these unlucky children would not be able to have such smiles if there were not people like you in this world." She looks at me and tells me: "Don't say that: if I was not there, other people would do it. I am simply an employee." And then, at my request, she starts telling me...

"Before, I used to work for the Provincial Women Group. Because of my fragile health, I had to take early retirement. When the Centre for the protection of children with difficulties (i.e. the Centre in charge of orphans) was founded, and started hiring nannies to take care of the abandoned children, I thought that this type of work would suit my own situation, so I applied. At first I worked in the orphanage. Then the number of children increased, and the orphanage started encouraging nannies to take the children into their own homes. I must admit that I had not envisaged my life would become so tied to these children from then until now. One after another, I can count today more than 30 children that I have taken care of. With many memories, happy, and sad as well..."

Do you remember the context of the arrival of the first child?

"I remember it very well. I remember every one of them, their drinking habits, when they cried, their sizes... The first one, it was in 1993, a baby who was approximately one-month-old, brought from Mong Cai... Her story was really sad. A couple of fishermen found a box floating on the river Kalong. Opening it, they discovered two babies, one had died and the other was her! The orphanage staff named her Hai (because she had been brought from Hai Ninh – the original name for Mong Cai). I brought her home; I would look at her with tears in my eyes. She was



minuscule in her big soft blanket. In it, she weighed less than 2.3kg. She was very feeble, pale as a leaf. She would cry all night long, but her voice was not as powerful as other kids'... I never had the chance to become a mother, so I can say that baby Hai was my first child. At the beginning, she required a lot of care and attention, and I was often exhausted. I was barely able to sleep at night. But little by little, things got better: when she was six months old, she was stronger and weighted 6.8kgs. When she started walking, a Canadian couple adopted her.

Madame Le shows me a picture on a shelf of a beautiful girl, full of life, beside the pictures of other children (who, I guess, were the other orphans cared for by Madame Le, like baby Hai) and she tells me: "In 1998, her parents sent this picture to the orphanage. She was four years old. I have had no more news since then."

The first days after her departure, how did you feel?

"What do you think I felt? I felt as if I was being burnt! Someone told me that I would get used to it with time, that it would fade away, because it was our job. But I must tell you that, still today, after having taken care of more than 30 children, I am still unable to get used to it. Each time I must say good-bye, I feel a loss... At such a time, I must repeat to myself that this child now has a family, with parents who will love him or her. She or he will be happy; I must therefore rejoice myself, why should I feel sadness...?"

You talk about healthy children, but I know that among the children you have cared for there was one who had aids...?

Madame Le from page 4

“Yes, it’s him (she turns her eyes towards a little altar, under the family altar). His name was Luan; had he still been alive today, he would now be ten years old. His biological mother abandoned him at birth in Bai Chay Hospital. When I received him, I did not know he was HIV positive. He had swollen eyes, with incessant secretions, even though I was wiping his eyes constantly. When I took him to the hospital, the doctors told me that he had caught syphilis from his mom. My God, why should an infant suffer so much in this world? I can say that the two years he spent with me were very difficult. Once he had been cured of syphilis, it was discovered that he had aids, so together, the two of us, we spent most of our time in the hospital...”

When you found out that he had aids, where you shocked?

“Yes, of course. But strangely enough, I never feared that I might catch his sickness. Maybe because I felt pity for him. I knew that he was not going to survive, and therefore I wanted to surround him with love. I used to spend sleepless nights, afraid he might leave me while my eyes would be closed...”

Madame Le seems much moved telling this story and remembering child Luan. She becomes silent.... Suddenly I remember the words she wrote in her diary during those long nights spent watching over the poor little boy in the hospital, and that one of my colleagues quoted at the time in the Quang Ninh newspaper, words that came from the bottom of her heart, words from a mother ready to give her life for the poor little one... I look towards the altar: he had clear eyes, like an angel. And I look at Madame Le, who gave him maternal love during his short life on earth... And I understand that the care this woman gives to the poor little ones is not simply a “paid job” as she claims, but it is love, unconditional love, like a mother’s, in the noblest sense of the term...

Trung Luan, Quang Ninh newspaper

(Originally written in Vietnamese and translated to French, then English. French Trans. Tran Bich Thuy, adapt. F. Lasselin. English Tran. Isabelle Cochelin, adapt. S. Kashino)



Sarah Lee (Hai) today.

In the summer of 2009 I had the privilege of visiting this wonderful nounou in her home in Quang Ninh - a tiny 2-bedroom house where she presently cares lovingly for two babies. It was a very emotional meeting in which we talked about all the children whom she cared for, each one of whom she remembers by name. She remarked that she never worries about the children who have gone to Canada - she knows they are happy.

On the other hand, I know that she would be extremely moved to receive news and photos of these children, many of whom, like Sarah Lee are teens or even young adults. If you will send your letters and photos to TDH, we will try to put together a fitting tribute to the life work of this beautiful lady in the form of an album with the materials received. If you are not sure whether Mme Le was your child's nounou, please send me an email and I will verify for you.

Dorinda Cavanaugh(dorinda@tdh.ca)

Why is Fundraising important?

Since becoming involved with TDH I have been asked many times why an adoption agency needs to raise funds. TDH commits to a lot of child welfare projects, contributing over \$240,000 in 2008 alone, helping about 1550 children. The importance of raising funds to support these projects is two-fold. The first and most salient reason is the overwhelming need. Anyone who has traveled to adopt their child can attest to how both the orphanages and the surrounding community have benefited from TDH's presence. The second reason is much more self-serving to the adoptive parent. Each of these projects helps to build the relationship between TDH and the government and orphanages of the country involved, in turn potentially increasing the referrals TDH might receive.

TDH Canada's Current Projects:

El Salvador: Fundacion Fundeliddi El Salvador

TDH purchased 115 school supply kits (valued at \$1,370 US) for children of war-wounded and disabled ex-soldiers.

Honduras: FANIA, Sister Mary Leonard School

TDH Canada has been involved with supporting this school for 30 years! In 2008 alone TDH contributed \$55,000 US helping 500 students.

Vietnam: Sponsorship Program

For the past 6 years TDH Canada has worked with the orphanages in both Quang Ninh and Vung Tau sponsoring children who are not adoptable. In 2008 TDH sponsored 20 children for an amount of \$6000 US.

Vietnam: University Scholarships

Four years ago TDH Canada began supporting the education of 12 very poor Vietnamese students, and just recently the program has grown to include many more students from the Ben Tre region.

Vietnam: Water Buffalo Project in Hoa Binh

In 2008, TDH purchased 12 water buffalos through this self-perpetuating project supervised by the local People's Committee, benefiting 50 children and their families.

Vietnam: Improvements to the orphanage of Hoa Binh province

TDH has committed to contributing \$250,000 US over a five-year period for improvements to the medical and social infrastructure of the orphanage.

Vietnam: Vinh Son Orphanage, Kontum province

TDH helps to finance projects which allow the Catholic sisters who direct these orphanages to be self-sufficient: weaving, coffee, banana and rubber plantations and farming of rice, fruits and vegetables.

Vietnam: Vung Tau

In 2008 alone TDH Canada supported the orphanages of Vung Tau through donations totaling approximately \$57000 US, contributing to the building of a new center in Long Hai, and helping to meet the essential needs of the roughly 215 children living in these orphanages.

For a more detailed account of TDH Canada's projects please visit:
www.tdh.ca

Christine Morra (christine@tdh.ca)

Fundraising 2009

~ a year in review

The year 2009 was a sort of watershed for TDH because it was in this year that TDH achieved a kind of critical mass out of which precipitated two amazing volunteer fundraising coordinators, Annie Cormier in Montreal and Christina Morra in Toronto. They each ran a Gala in their respective cities, Montreal and Toronto. The crowds were different, the character of the events were different, the décor and ambiance were different, the styles were different – but underneath all that difference was the common commitment to try to better the lives of children. These were first-time events for TDH Canada. Both organizers have been encouraged by their successes and both Annie and Christine are looking forward to organizing their Second Annual Gala, on Friday the 9th of April in Toronto, and on Wednesday the 22nd of September in Montreal. Volunteer helpers are very welcome.

For more information or to volunteer contact:
christine@tdh.ca (Ontario)
annie@tdh.ca (Quebec)

The financial results from these Galas, and other initiatives in 2009 were:

Quebec - \$82,000

Ontario - \$15,000

Kontom Relief - \$35,000

Dragonfly Campaign - \$9,810

A BIG thank you to Tracy Nguyen from Spruce Grove, Alberta who partnered with Aurora School in Edmonton where 400 students were asked to sell 2 dragonflies each, raising \$4000 for the Dragonfly Campaign, supporting orphans left in Vietnam orphanages. What a great idea! Thanks Tracy!

Brendan Cavanaugh (brendan@tdh.ca)
Manon Parent (manon@tdh.ca)

TDH CANADA PRESENTS

*a
concert
with
heart*



Please join us for an evening of beautiful music to better the future of many severely disadvantaged children in Vietnam, El Salvador and Honduras.

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 13, 2010

First Unitarian Congregation Church, 30 Cleary Ave., Ottawa
(near Woodroffe Ave. and the Ottawa River Parkway)

7:00 - 9:00 pm

Guest Host: CBC Radio personality Laurence Wall

Opening Remarks: TDH Canada Director General Brendan
Cavanaugh

Featured Performers:

Janice Mah (violin)

Kevin James (viola)

Peter Rapson (cello)

Angela Casagrande (oboe)

Catherine Donkin (piano)

Amélie Langlois (piano)

The program includes selections by Mozart, Ponchielli, Rossini, and Schubert.

Tickets: \$25

For more information or to purchase tickets please
email manon@tdh.ca or phone TDH Ontario's office:
613-482-6306

Dragonfly Campaign ~ paper crafter treasures

Congratulations to Marlene Alt (Ottawa), winner of the Vietnamese kitchen basket!



This quarter YOU have a chance to win a beautiful basket filled with paper crafting and scrapbooking items worth over \$50!

With each \$5 (+\$1.25 shipping) purchase of a dragonfly you are eligible for a chance to WIN! Each dragonfly comes with a

short description of what the \$5 donation means to a child in Vietnam, making it a delightful and meaningful gift. Contest closes March 31, 2010.

Purchase dragonflies at:
www.tdhdragonfly.com



2010 TDH Ontario Annual Charity Gala

Join us for a fun filled evening among old and new friends including a silent auction, dinner, dancing, and entertainment. All for a cause so near and dear to our hearts, supporting orphanages in Vietnam.

Date: Friday, April 9th, 2010

Time: 6:00 pm cocktails and 7:00 pm dinner

Where: Le Jardin Event and Conference Centre, 8440 Hwy 27, Woodbridge

Includes a 4 course meal, entertainment and deluxe open bar

Adults: \$75 (if tickets purchased prior to or on February 28th) or \$85 (if tickets purchased after February 28th)

Children: \$55 (4 course meal) or \$35 (chicken fingers and french fries)

Our goal is to have 400 people attend this year, doubling last year's attendance, so invite friends and family and make your own table (or two or three!)

***Ticket Sales Contest:** For every 10 tickets a TDH family sells, their name will be entered into a draw to win a private box to a TORONTO MARLIES game (18 tickets and a \$200 food voucher) valued at \$1000!!!*

To purchase tickets or for more information, please contact Christine at christine@tdh.ca

How can you help?

****Sell tickets:** It will be a great, fun night, so invite friends and family.*

****Donate a prize or service:** Can you or someone you know donate a prize or service to our raffle or silent auction?*

****Send your pictures and stories:** A slide show with pictures of your families, children and trips to Vietnam as well as your stories will be presented the night of the gala. Please send them to christine@tdh.ca.*

News and Current Events

Brendan Cavanaugh (brendan@tdh.ca)

Ontario International Adoption Agencies

When it comes to international adoption agencies, counting is not always as easy and it might seem because international adoption is not always the only or the primary activity of an organization. Moreover, having an Ontario license does not necessarily mean that the organization is active. Having said that, it appears that there are now, in 2009, 16 international adoption agencies in Ontario.

The Ontario Ministry has reacted to the recent Imagine bankruptcy, by asking these 16 agencies to form, for the first time ever, a Working Group to respond to the need to implement the Ministry's newly imposed "enhancements". This working group has met, physically and virtually, to discuss the content, format, cost and timing of these enhancements and made its report to the Ministry. Daria Hensiorowsky of the Adoptions from the Heart agency was the volunteer Chair.

Dorinda, with Brendan, accepted to head the Insurance Subcommittee – whose Interim Report points out that such insurance, which would protect adoptive parents or even adoption workers in the event of the collapse of an agency, however worthy an idea, would be very difficult to achieve. And if fraud were involved, then if such insurance were possible, it would be extremely difficult and expensive to obtain.

The Ministry's imposed "enhancements" are as follows:

- (1) a yearly audited financial statement ;
- (2) A Public Annual Report ;
- (3) A yearly signed report from the Board of Directors;
- (4) The formation of a Working Committee of the Agencies for the purpose of examining the feasibility of creating a self-funded insurance plan for international adoption agencies which would protect prospective parents in the event of an agency's closure.

As for TDH, it has provided an audited financial statement and Public Annual Report since its inception. The requirement for signed reports from the members of a Board of Directors is a unique demand of the

Ontario Ministry; such a thing has never before been demanded of a non-profit Board. And the Ministry's suggestion of self-funded insurance is unlikely to ever be implemented, unless the government should decide to pay for it, because the client base is not large enough to support the financial investment.

TDH Helps Ecuador-bound Imagine Families

When the Ontario agencies Imagine and St. Anne's Adoption Center declared bankruptcy during the summer of 2009, there were some 400 families on their waiting lists. Of those only 20 were waiting for adoptions from Ecuador, most of the rest were waiting for adoptions from Ethiopia.

We had no experience in Africa and there were other agencies with such experience that were willing to respond to this part of the problem. We had never worked in Ecuador before, but we did have a long experience working with Latin countries, particularly Honduras, and we thought we could help with Ecuador.

A number of issues had to be managed by the Trustees before anything else could be done. After lengthy deliberations the Ontario Ministry accepted TDH's offer to help the families waiting for Ecuador.

The aftermath of Imagine has been handled very responsibly. Imagine is being reconstituted. Nearly all of the assigned Ethiopian children are now with their adoptive families.

The bureaucratic situation for Ecuador turned out to be a bit complicated. The efforts to restructure the Ecuador/Canada international adoption program are still in process but approaching their final resolution. TDH has received its license from the Ontario Ministry to work in Ecuador; TDH's application for accreditation from Ecuador is in its last stage. What seems to be the final documents are being stamped and sealed this week. We hope that a favorable decision will be forthcoming from Ecuador shortly.

New and Current Events...cont'd

2009 Communications - Newsletters

This fourth issue marks the completion of the first 4-issue volume of TDH's two newsletters: the TDH Ontario Newsletter (English), under the editorship of Sharon Kashino and the Quebec L'Infolettre (French), under the editorship of Fanny Lasselin, Gregory Pierre, and Celine Lalbertie and their team of 10 volunteers. The newsletters are quarterly publications, with the 15th of April, June, October, and January as the target publication dates for the English newsletter and the 30th of those months for the French newsletter. Distribution is in the hands of Emi Svetlitzka in the Montreal Office. Currently the newsletters are published online. The technical aspects of posting the newsletters on their respective websites are managed by Marlene Alt in Ontario and by Gregory Pierre in Quebec.

Both newsletters have enjoyed an enormously successful first year. The volunteers working on both newsletters are open to accepting new talent and developing new approaches to these publications. If you are interested in collaborating with the newsletter teams there are opportunities ranging from design and layout, solicitation of advertisements, coordination of feature sections, research, writing, translation, graphic design and more. Your contributions in the form of photos, articles and/or comments continue to be very much appreciated as well.

Please Contact:

TDHO team: sharon@tdh.ca

Infolettre team: tdh.infolettre@gmail.com

News from Vankleek Hill

TDH tries to be a good corporate citizen of Vankleek Hill, Ontario, where the office is located, by participating in appropriate civic events. In that spirit, on January 23rd, Saturday evening, at 7:30pm, Dr. Brendan Cavanaugh will present the third lecture in the Phil Arbour's 2010 Speaker Series at the Arbor Art Gallery, 36 Home Avenue, Vankleek Hill, Ontario (www.arbourgallery.org). The theme of the talk is "Rhymes & Reasons: Before Radio, TV and print, NEWS was still happening". The ticket at the door is \$6.00 per person.

2009 TDH Federation Meeting

The International Federation of Terre des Hommes (IFTDH) holds a yearly meeting of its 12-Country membership which TDH Canada is obliged to attend. TDH Canada's representative is Secretary General, Brendan Cavanaugh, assisted by TDH Director of International Affairs, H  l  ne Parisian. This year H  l  ne represented TDH Canada at the Federation's November 2009 meeting at the offices of TDH in Lausanne, Switzerland.

The Federation in general is oriented to upholding the rights of children caught in abusive circumstances and seeks collaboration with other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) towards that goal. It is a family network of 12 international organizations, fairly decentralized, with 933 humanitarian projects in 65 countries, representing an investment in children of about \$110,000,000 and is funded 53% by the public, the rest being sought in grants.

Not surprisingly, the big topic this year was the squeeze being put on NGOs due to the general global financial downturn. The resulting reaction is to cluster together under the questionable protection of the United Nations (UN), which of course gives rise to competition. In the big picture there is also a defensive stance of honesty and transparency being promoted in view of various NGO problems that have been reported in the media.

International adoption has always been an issue with the Federation for reasons of its European history and perspective. And some members, such as TDH Lausanne, have taken a very public negative position on international adoption. We have taken the recent bold attack in Vietnam on international adoption by the International Social Service as a wake-up call. We feel that we have a responsibility to speak out against the rising tide of aggressive opposition to international adoption. It is time to take a stronger positive, public position in support of international adoption. H  l  ne has indicated that we have requested that the topic of international adoption be placed on the agenda for next year at which time we will make a presentation.

NEW Arrivals!

Darren and Shuko of Vancouver, BC welcomed Elise Hayden, born Jan 4, 2009, from **Quang Ninh**. They arrived home October 20, 2009.



darrenjohner@hotmail.com
www.slightlyoliver.com

In June 2009, parents Brad and Jennifer and siblings Shawn, Nathan, Joel and Eve welcomed QuinnAnh Thu Grace into our family. QuinnAnh was four when she joined us and is adjusting well to cold, snowy Muskoka winters! She continues to amaze and delight us with her acquisition of English and her adorable nature. She is truly a blessing to our family.



QuinnAnh and her big sister Eve
bradley@muskoka.com

To have your Arrival announced in an upcoming newsletter please email sharon@tdh.ca

Broader ADOPTION ISSUES

ISS Report "Adoption from Vietnam"

In recent months there have been some significant reports attacking international adoption presented to the international community. The most troubling is the report written by the International Social Service (ISS), "Adoption from Vietnam". ISS is a post World War II, European Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) dedicated to the principle of returning children to their birth parents. We are in the process of reviewing these documents.

Read the full ISS report at:

http://www.omc.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=/documents/legislation/ISS_Report_Adoption_from_Vietnam_Nov_2009.doc

Contact Brendan to contribute your thoughts to TDH's defense of International Adoption to be presented in October, 2010 at the TDH Federation meeting in Milan, Italy. ~ brendan@tdh.ca

"Positive Adoption Language Guide"

Recently on the Yahoo Group attention was drawn to a useful guide to positive adoptive language for teachers. Providing a copy to your child's teacher is an easy way to open the door of communication.

<http://www.familyhelper.net/ad/adteach.html>

"Pre- and Post-Adoption Services for Transracially/Transnationally Adopted Children & Their Families"

You are invited to participate in this study to assess the availability and effectiveness of adoption services in Canada for families created through transracial adoption.

<http://www.adoption.ca/Pre%20Post%20Adoption%20Study.pdf>

Family Features: Rosie – A very special love story

I have five children - ages 28, 24, 20(twins) - and 3!

A second marriage? Mid-life crisis? An "accident"? - or just a very special love story?

Adoption has been a part of our lives since almost the beginning of our marriage, and after three adoptions and endless hours of volunteer work on behalf of adoptive parents and children, it had become my professional life as well. For my husband and me, as our twins approached 18, we had considered our child-rearing years almost at an end. But that was all before Rosie.

My work as director of Terre Des Hommes Canada takes me to Vietnam five or six times a year. And though it has always been exciting and wonderful to see the beautiful healthy babies I will be able to present to waiting parents, I am all too often moved by the plight of those who will in all probability grow up in institutions, and even more by those who may not grow up at all.

One such instance occurred in January 1996 when I noticed in one of "our" orphanages in Vietnam a baby bundled in many layers of clothing, struggling to breathe. Her tiny, emaciated little face was a pasty white, and as I unwrapped the layers of cloth, I could almost see with the rapid rise and fall of the tiny chest a heart struggling to pump the blood she needed to keep her alive.

Asking about her, I was told that they were only waiting for her to die - she

had been in and out of hospitals since her arrival in the orphanage six months earlier, and there was nothing to be done now but keep her as comfortable as possible. And with all the compassion and love imaginable, this is exactly what the orphanage staff was doing.

I asked if I might help - perhaps take her to a hospital in Hanoi to ask their input. And the orphanage gratefully agreed. So little Huong went back with me to Hanoi, and spent the first of many nights beside me in bed.

The hospital in Hanoi was quick to diagnose her: ventricular septal defect and mitral valve insufficiency, requiring open heart surgery, which only the Heart Institute in Saigon was equipped to perform, if they were willing to see her. Waiting lists were long and my time in Vietnam was limited, so they were not optimistic.

Back to the orphanage. I was going to Saigon. Could she come with me? In an unprecedented move, the orphanage agreed, and off we flew to Saigon, after a quick call to my waiting colleague, My Tram. We would have a third roommate for the next few days.

My Tram met us at the airport, not entirely convinced I had not taken leave of my senses. But it didn't take long before she was on the phone to the Heart Institute, telling them we had been especially referred by Dr. Khanh of Hanoi, who was certain that Dr. Duperier would want to take on this special case. An amused nurse (whom

we later learned was the wife of Dr. Duperier) gave us an appointment for the next day.

That evening, I told My Tram that if this baby was going to stay with us, even temporarily, we would have to find a name I could pronounce ("Hoo-ung" just didn't fly). "Well," she said "a rough translation of her name might be Rosie". And so she is to this day. I later learned that her name is better translated "Autumn Rose".

At seven months, Rosie weighed about eight pounds. She could not sit or even hold up her head. Her arms and legs were completely "floppy" and could be moved into positions only a contortionist was capable of. But she had an indomitable spirit and a charm that could soften the hardest of hearts. And slowly but surely, she was working her way into mine.

The Heart Institute did see her, and agreed to do the surgery, which she needed urgently, but only if she weighed a minimum of 12 to 14 pounds - otherwise it was too risky. After rejections from several places, we finally found an orphanage which agreed to take her, and with great sadness, I left Vietnam - and Rosie - behind.

During the two months I was away, Rosie again had to be rushed to the hospital with severe pneumonia, and to my bitter disappointment, when I returned in April, she had lost more weight. Even more devastating, when I saw her I thought she had lost her spirit - what I saw was a severely depressed

baby, who would neither smile nor make eye contact.

We immediately returned to the Heart Institute to be told that the situation was now critical and, high risk or not, she should be scheduled for heart surgery one week later. "Take her home with you and try to put some fat on her during the next week," they told me.

I had brought cans of enriched formula and Milupa cereal (both thanks to the generosity of Wyeth), which I mixed together and shoved in her mouth every time she opened it during the next week. Dr. Duperior noted that the geese being stuffed for foie gras had nothing on Rosie. Rosie gained more than a pound that week, and regained as well her indefatigable spirit. The transformation in this child was nothing short of a miracle.

As the surgery approached and my sense of dread and apprehension grew, I tried to make sense of the feelings evoked in me by this little creature. Her courage – because I think she was keenly aware of what was happening to her – moved me for sure. Her ability to leave everyone who saw her with the sense that this child must be saved could not help but impress.

I knew I was tumbling down a slide from which there was no retreat. Friends and colleagues told me to step back, not to be personally involved. And I had "rescued" many children before and been able to maintain a certain "objectivity". But this time I felt that this child's destiny was somehow linked to my own. And now before me was

the chance that we might lose her.

But the other thing I began to realize about Rosie was that this feeling was not only one way. Orphanage staff, doctors and nurses at the hospital, people on the street remarked on it – "you are her mother," they would say. And even though each contact between us was relatively brief – two weeks every two months – the intensity was almost tangible.



The surgery, as you might guess, was successful. But three months later we still needed to face the other problems which were still present. At 14 months she could barely hold up her head, could not sit or bear weight on her legs, a trans-fontanel sonogram revealed an old "cranial hemorrhage", and another doctor tried to convince me that her large head suggested hydrocephaly – all of which left Rosie with a very uncertain future.

But I had fallen in love completely with this child, and in my heart, none of those things really mattered. But we were no longer in our 20's or 30's, my husband had had some serious health problems in the past, our income was

on the low side of average, and to take on any child, let alone one who was physically (and perhaps mentally) challenged was not a decision to be taken lightly. Was it even fair to Rosie, we asked ourselves.

After much soul-searching, a lot of prayer, and the usual hassle of paperwork, Rosie came home with us in December, 1996. Now, two years later, we cannot imagine life without her. She delights in the sun shining in her room in the morning, in the wind on her face in autumn, in the snowflakes on her tongue in winter, but most of all in the love of her family – and she makes us appreciate on a daily basis just how precious life is.

*Dorinda Cavanaugh
Originally published in We Adopted From
Vietnam... You Can, Too!
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Rosie is now almost 15, and continues to be a child who touches the lives of all who meet her. She is intensely devoted to her family - now numbering 17 with brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces - and a typical teenager doing all the things that teenagers do. She has no physical problems, and surpasses most of her fellow students in the dance concentration program she is in. She adores being a friend, and is sought out for the comfort she offers to those in need. We her parents are so proud of her, and grateful every moment of our lives to Vietnam, to the orphanage, and to God for bringing us together.

Dorinda Cavanaugh (dorinda@tdh.ca)

Family Features: Rosie - Return to Vietnam

My name is Rosie Cavanaugh, I'm 14 and it's been 12 years since I was adopted from Vietnam. Through those 12 years, I've learned so much from life and have grown and matured through the experiences that have occurred in my life. One of the most memorable ones was my return to my birthplace in the summer of '08. I had just turned 13 and I felt as ready as ever to get on that plane for those 36 hours because I knew something big awaited me on the other side.

When we had landed, the rush of hot summer air reminded me that I had finally arrived at my destination, my homeland, Vietnam. At the beginning, I felt like a stranger in my own country. I had to make a few challenging adjustments due to their climate, their food as well as their customs. But it didn't take long before I finally felt welcomed, not only by the personnel that my mom works with, but more so by the children as well. The children in the orphanages were very friendly and welcoming, I was profoundly touched; without even knowing who I was, they came to me with open arms and hugged me. I felt as if I was no longer a foreigner but more like a friend. As I began to hand out the various gifts, candies and toys to the children, bashful "thank you's" and smiles of laughing children illuminated the room. I realized then that a small act of kindness can really mean the world to others.

Among the other children with whom I shared beds 14 years ago, I was blessed and fortunate to have been cared for such sweet and loving "nounous". It was important for me pay them a return visit, so I did. I visited my first "nounou" an elderly woman living simply but contently on top of a big hill near the orphanage. Upon my arrival, she was so thrilled to see me and showed me right away this photo album that

contained so many photos of me growing up, from when I was a baby in her arms to a dancer posing in a pink dress. It brought tears to everyone's eyes. It left me speechless seeing this charming woman, who had achieved so much helping orphans like me, end up where she is with so little and yet remaining a happy woman. I am grateful to have taken that part of her back with me.

My visit with my other nounou, a middle-aged woman living in what seemed from the outside as a big box with a bed and a tv inside - no stove, no running water, no closet for clothes - was a very different one. I could see a certain pain and sadness in her eyes that she tried



to hide so dearly with a smile. She too kept a smaller album of me and showed me all the photos of when I was a baby, and a few of when she was younger. She then presented me with a silver necklace chain. It was a small gift, but it was evident that she had worked days to pay for it, and it was very important to me. We hugged and we cried; it was hard for me to leave knowing that I wasn't able to help her in the ways she did for me, all I could do was to pray hard for her and that I did.

I could write a book on the different experiences that I had during those 2 weeks, but today I only have an article. If there's anything that I have learned from this trip that is significant for the one that you might make with your children someday, it's the word opportunity. We, as adopted children, are given the chance to become someone, to build and live a life filled with dreams, wishes and desires that will come true. It is important then, at the end of the day, to remember our homeland, the place where we should be the most grateful because of what it has given us, and that is... the opportunity of life.

Rosie Cavanaugh(rosiecavanaugh@hotmail.com)

Family Features: Journey to Ecuador

I soon realized that no journey carries one far unless, as it extends into the world around us, it goes an equal distance into the world within. ~Lillian Smith

Early in the summer, I had been planning to go to Ecuador for two weeks to study Spanish as a continuation towards learning about the language and culture of my chosen adoptive country. I had done all my research and had narrowed down my choices of language schools to about four when, on the afternoon of July 13th it felt like the sky had silently fallen on me as I sat at my desk at work and read the first of many frantic e-mails saying that my adoption agency, Imagine adoption, had just declared bankruptcy. Somehow I got myself home, called my family to tell them the news, and then headed over to my brother's house for a family dinner. We absorbed the details of the news as I conveyed to them what I knew.

Over the next few days, and weeks, it was like being in a constant conference call with messages appearing second by second on the yahoo group message boards. We (all the waiting parents) drafted letters and sent them out to every sympathetic friend and family member we could think of and sent them in great numbers to directors, ministers, and politicians - any and every decision maker or supporter imaginable. We made phone calls, brainstormed, talked to the media and attended a bankruptcy creditors meeting and amidst all this, one day, we heard the word that an agency called TDH (Terre des Hommes) was interested in helping us by taking on our files ... HUGE relief, tears of joy... and the feeling of solid ground beneath my feet again for the first time in many days.

And then I thought, well, I had been planning on going to Ecuador a few weeks ago, and now I think I will still go and that is what I did.

TDH's Involvement in Ecuador

TDH has committed to helping the families impacted by the Imagine bankruptcy to complete their adoptions. Further announcements will be made when this program is available for new families.

Dorinda is also working with The Ontario Ministry in development of protocols that will prevent situations like that of Imagine from happening again.



Katie with Catherine's girls, Sarah and the newly arrived Andrea, at the Equator, September 4, 2009.

In the two weeks I spent there, I had one of the best holidays I have ever had. It was my first time to South America and as I got to know my host family and other people at the school, I sometimes found myself overwhelmed with emotion in response to their warmth and the way they so immediately embrace a person (in this case, me). And maybe it was also the thought that this was my future child's home country that made me feel so in awe at times. After adjusting to the altitude for the first two days, I studied for four hours every day at the Vida Verde language school in Quito. Between that and the coaching of my host family, my language learning progressed nicely. I went to the Otavalo markets one Saturday and pre-shopped for Christmas gifts and bought as much as I could carry to bring home with me. I ate ceviche that we made at the school, and drank jugo and lots of delicious and healthy soups for lunch. I volunteered at a day care one afternoon and another day I met with a fellow adoptive parent Catherine from the U.S. / Ecuador adoptive program who was there collecting her little girl Andrea from her first home in the orphanage to her forever home with her. We all went to the Equator together on my last afternoon in Quito. Hopefully soon, I will go back to the Equator again with my own child, with the help of TDH.

Katie Hopkins(katieinnorth@hotmail.com)

Adoption in Depth... red tape

International Adoption Agencies navigate the complex world that is international adoption in the self-less quest to find homes for children who need them. Since International adoption workers have no significant status, they have to work in a no-man's land diplomatically. Yet they have to interact with provincial and federal Canadian governments, the provincial and federal governments of other countries (as well as various levels particular organizations such as the Peoples Committees in Vietnam). They must learn how to deal with various specific officials (and their successors) at many different levels. Delegations are sponsored and welcomed into our country and initiatives put in place to raise funds to offer humanitarian aid in the partner countries. It is only through developing and fostering these relationships within our own and other countries that the Canadian International program can continue.

If that were not difficult enough, there are constantly changing legal and diplomatic elements to be researched, known and respected. There is the required communication with the potential adoptive parents along with the multitude of logistic details relative to each individual adoption to manage. Throughout these processes, the agency must maintain its own reputation, identification and status in the local, provincial, national, and international realms. In every one of these areas there is 'red tape' of one type or another that must be processed. The quantity of red tape continues to increase and there are frequently changes in its detailed deployment. From time to time there are knots in the red tape that must be teased apart before the process can continue. Moreover, it seems that Canadian agencies have more red tape to process than agencies in other countries.

For example, one sending country requires that every document be authorized. That meant that the agency had to pay the embassy \$550 per document: the total cost for one case was about \$30,000. Another country wants an original certification of the validity of the notary's license attached to every piece of paper. In one instance, there were about 37 documents to be legalized at the country's embassy. But before this could be done, documents needed to be certified at Foreign Affairs. But this office will only accept 10 documents from the same person at a time. That office protocol meant that four agency people had to travel to Toronto and present batches of documents at staggered intervals over four days.

But international adoption is not alone in facing this problem. The quantity of paperwork has reached the point where many small companies have to hire someone just to fill out forms. The consequences of not filling out the latest form are expensive in terms of time and costs related to expiring documents; and in some instances there are fines imposed. To cite a report from the world of small businesses in Canada, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) reports that the burden of red tape is a problem in every province. Canada's small operations are forced to spend about \$30 billion dollars a year to comply with government regulations.

Is all this red tape worth it? Well, 60% of small operations say that the proliferation of bureaucratic demands has become too much; it is excessive. It significantly reduces productivity and increases costs; and that it is particularly true in Canada. Every adoptive family waiting for approvals and authorizations know well the anguish of these red tape delays. It is generally felt that about half of the red tape has become redundant and uselessly repetitive; it should be reduced. The CFIB says that the quantity could and should be reduced.

In the spirit of reform, British Columbia counted up 380,000 different requirements that had to be met for small businesses. The province reduced the number by 40%. Nova Scotia tallied up 615,000 worker hours per year spent on paperwork; they are trying to reduce it by 15%. But the fact is that the political will to reduce red tape is lacking – after all, red tape is what bureaucrats get paid to process.

So when you feel frustrated because some piece of paper is not in your file yet or some other piece of paper has to be renewed, or some new requirement is demanded...remember that the agency not only shares your frustration, but felt it first. Be patient with us as we struggle with the problem on your behalf. It is not us. It is not even international adoption. The unchecked growth of bureaucratic demands is now considered to be out of control. It is affecting every walk of life, particularly in Canada. We are just as much a victim of this social issue as everyone else. We are doing our best to cope, please be patient with us.

Brendan Cavanaugh(brendan@tdh.ca)

TDH Family Functions & Fundraisers

Celebrate TET with TDH ~ Sat, Feb. 27 in Kingston

Johanne Wagner, an adoptive parent from Kingston, and I are organizing a Tet Celebration for the TDH Ontario families! Kingston is the perfect location, half-way between Toronto and Ottawa. Based on the popular event in Montreal, we hope to have a troop of Vietnamese dancers that perform a Dragon Dance and a Vietnamese buffet (we are open to other suggestions). Our plan is to hold this on Saturday afternoon, February 27th. We would like to invite the members of the Vietnamese embassy to join us. In order to continue our plans we must know how many people would be planning to attend this Tet Celebration. There will be a minimal fee, based on the number of families.

Please RSVP to manon@tdh.ca by January 29, 2010 indicating if you will attend and how many there will be of you.

Manon Parent (manon@tdh.ca)

Toronto Holiday Party

On December 5th, about 25 families met at Just Ducky in Toronto for an afternoon of good food, lots of laughs and adorable children having fun! Thanks to the overwhelming turnout and generosity of the families, \$685.00 was raised for TDH.

Christine Morra(christine@tdh.ca)

Family Features Submissions

We would like to publish family experience stories on a regular basis in our newsletter. This is your chance to share your happiness and joy, challenges and successes. You are invited you to submit stories of your adoptive experience with or without pictures. You may also submit just photos, with descriptive captions. Send submissions to: sharon@tdh.ca

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