

CHILDLINK

A publication of Dillon International, Inc.

Making a Better Life for Families and Children Around the World Since 1972

Summer 2008

Through the Eyes of a Child

Editor's Note: In our 36 years of uniting children and families, we never cease to be amused, amazed and humbled by the lessons "our" children teach us. Here are a few stories that uniquely illustrate God's love revealed...

the best stories are told when you're having fun,

Our three-year-old Sarah was playing with her dollies. She had them all lined up in the playpen. Pretty soon, her somewhat bored brothers (Sam, 10, and Seth, 9) joined in and they set up an orphanage. Yup, an orphanage! They named all the babies, shopped for food and clothes, took care of them, handled paperwork, fielded phone calls, and celebrated as each baby got her forever mommy and daddy. Each time, Sarah was so excited to tell how the baby was sooooo happy to get her mommy and her daddy and the mommy and the daddy were so happy to get their baby.

As they rocked her dollies, my sons told their little sister about babies who needed mommies and daddies, and mommies and daddies who couldn't wait to hold their babies. My daughter was so excited to tell, essentially, her story.

Other kids play house, but my kids play orphanage. To think that this pain and loss is part of their story! The whole scene was something to behold.

It's easy, especially as the kids get older, to think that we aren't any different from other families. Yesterday was a good reminder that we are.

—Alisa Larson
Dillon adoptive mom



our imaginations soar highest when grounded in love,



Elijah and his Poppy are in the back yard. They watch planes flying on their way to the airbase. Elijah points up. "Plane!" he says. The plane flies lower and lower—and goes out of sight. Elijah looks puzzled. Poppy says, **"It went behind the trees. The plane has gone home."**

Another plane flies over. "Plane!" says Elijah. The plane goes out of sight.

"Behind trees" says Elijah. "Plane gone home."

Elijah and Poppy go into the house. Elijah flies his toy plane around the living room. "Rrrrrrrr," growls Elijah. He flies his plane behind a chair. "Behind trees," he says. "Plane home." Poppy picks up Elijah and says, "You flew on a plane from Korea. Your mommy and daddy brought you on a plane to America." Poppy holds Elijah by his tummy and flies him around the room. "Rrrrrrrr," growls Poppy. Elijah laughs. Poppy says, "You are flying on a plane from Korea."

Poppy starts to put Elijah down. "Again!" says Elijah. So Poppy flies him around the room again and again. Elijah laughs and laughs. "This plane has to come in for a landing!" puffs Poppy. He plops down on the couch with Elijah.

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Congratulations

To the following families on their recent arrivals!



Ann Nix (India) MO



Anna Zussman (Korea) CA



Annalee Spitler (Korea) TX



Atar MacCurtin (India) PA



Beckett Wagner (Vietnam) KS



Jaelynn Kay (Korea) MO



Jansen Pennell (India) NC



Ethan Ward (Korea) OK



Luke Oakley (India) NC



Maia Terry (Guatemala) MO



Darlynn Kemling (China) KS

A Daughter from China

Eric and Tricia Headley
Brian and Lori Kemling
Jason and Shannon Koeninger
Galen and Karen Lowe
Jim and Linda Moore

A Son from China

Frank and Susan Frederick
Brian and Kirsten Land

A Daughter from Guatemala

Brad and Elsa Terry

A Daughter from India

Brendan and Meg MacCurtin
Kyle and Susanne Nix

A Son from India

Sudeep and Tammi Gupta
Darrell and Cindy Oakley
Jack and Joy Pennell

A Daughter from Korea

Matthew and Josephine Carroll
Tim and Margie Chilson
Jeff and Karen Dees
Tracy and Sarah Hakenewerth
Randy and Jill Kay
Mark and Amy Koller
Chris and Jean Matthews
Tim and Michelle Regal
Boyd and Rhonda Runnels
John and Courtney Spitler

A Son from Korea

Steve and Jennifer Graham
Simon Park and Chi-ah Chun
Brady and Julie Speers
Todd and Colleen Tumbarello
Kenny and Shannon Ward

A Daughter from Vietnam

Joe and Christa Bean
Jason and Dawn Hamm
Mark Prein and Lori Morse
Garrett and Heidi Prevo
Dean and Benita Reimer
Donald and Kay Webster

A Son from Vietnam

Bob and Carla Crane
Shawn and Dawn Lee
James and Amy McBride
Keith and Karlyn McCullough
Mark Prein and Lori Morse
Michael and Heather Oar
Jimmie and Stormy Silkey

Thinking About Adopting Older Children? Here's Some Food for Thought!

By Rebecca Leaming-Hackworth, MSW, LCSW



When my husband and I first started the adoption process, we learned about two sisters, ages two and four, in an orphanage in Haiti. We were so excited about these

two treasures waiting for us. I never gave their ages a second thought. Looking back, I think I should have been asking more questions and reading more books. Now that I have become a social worker and understand more of the challenges adopting older children can present for families and children, I realize God's mercy covered a great deal of ignorance on my part!

Most adoption requests are for children as young as possible. Parents don't want to miss any more time in a child's life than absolutely necessary, and many believe infants won't face challenges with attachment and bonding like older children will. In fact, the biggest indicator for attachment struggles is the number of caregivers a child has before they finally land in their adoptive family. Thus, a nine-month-old who has had three different caregivers may be more prone to attachment struggles than a five-year-old who had a consistent foster family from the time she left her birth family.

"We chose an older child because we felt most older children get passed over for younger ones," said an adoptive mother whose daughter from China joined her family when she was nearly five years old. "We knew there would be different issues, such as language barriers, grief, etc."

There are a lot of questions to ask yourself when deciding if you could parent an older child: How flexible is our lifestyle? Are we ready to make the changes necessary to accommodate a child's needs? What are some of the difficulties we might expect?

I asked some parents on Dillon International's Older Child Adoption Forum to share their advice. Parents said sibling rivalry and how a child would fit in with the personalities of other children in the home were important considerations. "We took into account the personality of our oldest child," one mom recalled. "We wanted her to be a sister, not a mother, so we chose an age span that would put five years (at the most) between our adopted child and the oldest child."

Parents also emphasized turning to other adoptive families for information and support from the very

beginning of the adoption process. Such networking will help you know what questions to ask and will create a crucial support system for you after your child arrives. "Connect with other adoptive families of older children," said an adoptive mother of three siblings who joined her family at ages five, eight, and ten. "I cannot imagine going through some of the unique challenges associated with older-child adoption if I had not found a few friends who've been there and done it—or who are going through it with me—that I can call on when nobody else can truly



understand or relate. This has not only been important for me, but my children have benefited from the wisdom and help my friends have offered."

Choosing to adopt an older child is an important decision, as is any adoption choice. Take the time to be honest about your family situation, do the research and talk to others who have been there. Adopting an older child just might be the perfect thing for your family.

Editor's note: This series on older child adoption will continue in the next issue and will explore the how-to's of raising these children.



Attention:

2008 SENIORS

To be featured in the Fall Senior Pages, please submit your senior photo by July 21, 2008. You may email photos (jpeg format, 300 dpi) to rosalyn@dillonadopt.com or mail them to Childlink Editor, Dillon International, 3227 E 31st St, Ste 200, Tulsa, OK, 74105.





Abbie Graves (Korea) at her Tol party-TX



Abigail Leese (Guatemala) WI



Brenna and Bridget McConnell with their sister from Korea



Audrey Casstevens (China) TX



Christopher and Tammi Rainwater (Korea) TX



Ashlie, Annie and Allie German (China) MO



The November 1997 China travel group reunited on their 10th anniversary



Cole and Sophie Powers (India) OK



Daniel Dobson (Guatemala) OK



Darsee Green (China) OK



Douglas Tyser (India) TN



Gabby Ewert (Haiti) MO



Sam Choi (Korea) TX

Memorable Moments



Howard Eoff (Vietnam) AR



Izzy Stern (Vietnam) DC



Kate Holmes (China) AR



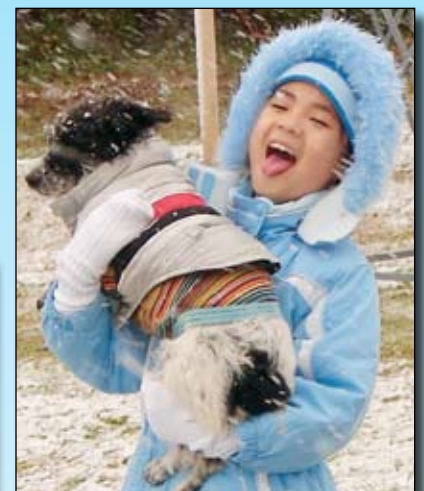
Nakeisha LaMonica (Korea) married Henry Schimke in 2007



Shasteen and Brodine kids (Vietnam and Guatemala) OK and KS



Saoirse Dennehy (China) MA



Saylor Marie Cha Hounsel (Korea) enjoying rare East Texas snow with Skipper



Rocco Willis (Vietnam) and him mom at his adoption finalization- GA



Sophie Powers (India) OK



The Tuon Family (Korea) MA



Hannah Johns (China) TX



The Reynolds family (India) KY

“Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.”

Psalm 31:25

From the Executive Director's Desk



There really is strength in numbers...together we are making a difference.

Every dollar you donate impacts a child's life. Worldwide aid needs are overwhelming, but together our dollars can make a difference.

We are excited about the future as we continue to work with wonderful staff and children in South Korea, Vietnam, China, Guatemala, Haiti, India and Ukraine. We also look forward to the possibility of expanding our humanitarian aid efforts to Ethiopia, Kenya and Cambodia.

We remain dedicated to our ongoing pre- and post-adoption education and services for families...heritage camps and tours are expanding every year. We continue to offer our consultation services to countries that need support and training on adoption issues. All of these programs are vitally needed.

Dillon International's board and staff have a rich history of searching for the best way to serve children and families in this country and around the world. We depend on God's leadership to direct our efforts and we pray for His involvement in all that we endeavor to accomplish.

Denise Dillon

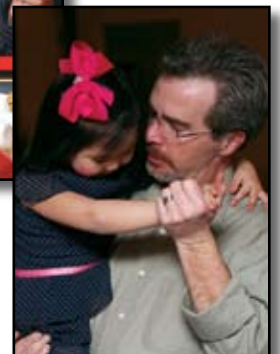
Focus on Regional Offices: Missouri

This past February, the local Caring Hearts group, in partnership with Dillon's Missouri office, hosted a Valentine's Day dinner and dance for families with the proceeds benefiting orphanCare International. Adoptive dad Brad Dillahunty volunteered as DJ and had everyone dancing to the fun tunes. Attendees enjoyed the fellowship, and the chocolate fountain was a big hit with all the kids. People at the event were able to choose a "valentine" from the heart bouquet centerpieces and donate to fulfill a specific need of an orphan.

The Missouri office coordinates fun family events throughout the year, including Korean Children's Day in May and "Trunk-or-Treating" in October.



Enjoying the chocolate fountain!



Guy Argent shares a dance with daughter Corynn



The Thrasher family gets into the Trunk or Treat spirit!

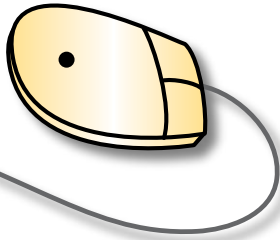
FREE GIFT!

Register for a chance to win a valuable gift from the country of your choice. Simply visit www.dillonadopt.com/prize.htm to enter the drawing. Limit one entry per family. Hurry! The winners will be chosen July 15.

Internet Corner

As Dillon continually expands its presence throughout the online community, we need your help to spread our message of hope for children around the world.

- **Online Auction.** As part of our Lunar New Year celebration next year, we will be having a nationwide online auction. If you are interested in helping to obtain auction items (it doesn't matter where you live), please email Tonnie@dillonadopt.com.
- **Join our Cause.** Request Dillon International and/or orphanCare International to be your Myspace and Facebook friends. Become a member of our Cause on Myspace or Facebook. Tell all your friends to do the same.
- **Go viral.** Watch our videos on YouTube. Send the link to friends and family. <http://youtube.com/user/dillonintl>
- **Blog away.** Write about Dillon and/or orphanCare on your blog, your friends' blogs or any like-minded blog.
- **Get linked.** Post a link to Dillon's website on your website, blog or page.



continued from cover

"Where trees?" asks Elijah.

"I'm a tree," says Poppy. He holds out his arms like branches.

"Behind trees!" says Elijah. Poppy puts his arms around Elijah. Elijah cuddles close to Poppy and says, "**Elijah home.**"

—David L. Roper

Dillon grandfather to Elijah Lovejoy

*and the best gifts get better when
you share them.*

While touring an orphanage in Cambodia, one of the women in my group began passing out candy to the children. When offered a piece of candy, one child just pointed at the bag several times and walked away. A little later, he was again offered a piece of candy and again he just pointed to the bag without any comment or eye contact. The woman opened the bag and the child quickly took several pieces and ran back to his room. I know the children don't have much of anything, but I couldn't help but think this boy was being a little selfish by taking so much candy. I followed him to his room and peered in without him seeing me. As I stood there, my earlier assumption was shattered. **There the boy was, reaching over the bed rail, giving the candy to a boy in a large crib.** The severely handicapped child's frail arms and legs moved with delight and his eyes were dancing with excitement. The expression on his face was beyond description.

The beauty of children and the way they see the world never ceases to amaze me. This child had little to nothing to call his own, yet he had learned that one is more blessed to give than to receive. What a great example of God's love!

—Jerry Dillon

Dillon International co-founder

CALLING ALL HAITI FAMILIES!

This Thanksgiving, join Dillon International's Director of Social Services, Haiti Program Director and Haiti adoptive mom Rebecca Hackworth as she leads Dillon's inaugural **Visit Haiti Tour**. Highlights of the trip include visiting the orphanage and projects of the Foundation for the Children of Haiti, work projects for the children, trips to the mountains and the beach, and birth search services, if possible. Dates: November 22-29, 2008. Cost: TBD. For more information: Angela@dillonadopt.com.



Have a heart for service and a desire to travel internationally?

Then the **Sharing Heart Mission Trip: Korea** may be just for you. This October, a group of adoptive families and other service-oriented individuals will travel to Seoul and surrounding areas to serve children in need as well as the community at large. While the main focus of the trip is service, a short time will be spent on cultural events and sightseeing. Adoption search and intermediary services may be possible. Dates: October 21-30, 2008. Cost: TBD. For more information: Angela@dillonadopt.com.



Spotlight on Success: Hayley Tuon

By Susan Serrano

Adoption is doubly important to Hayley Tuon, who added the title of Dillon International “adoptive parent” to her role as “adult adoptee” last winter, when she and her husband, Neang, adopted their one-year-old daughter, Kaylah, from South Korea.

“Adoption is an amazing journey that can also be very overwhelming,” recalled Hayley, 31, who was adopted from Korea in 1978 by David and Sally Burke of North Chelmsford, MA. “This is true regardless of whether you are adopted or not, but some of Kaylah’s circumstances paralleled my own and this was especially emotionally intense.”

Hayley is a 1999 graduate of the University of Rhode Island, where she met her husband, who was born in Cambodia, at a club meeting for Asian students. She is a registered nurse in the Intensive Care Unit of Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston.

Hayley’s first journey to her birth country was in 2000, when she and her aunt toured the country in celebration of her college graduation. A year later, she was selected to participate in Eastern Social Welfare Society’s Korean Language Program at Kyung University in Seoul. After she completed the classes, her parents and Neang made their first trip to Korea to visit her. “Neang proposed to me while at the Korean Folk Village, and to top it all off, on my return trip to the U.S., I escorted a baby girl home to her adoptive family in New York. It was at this moment that Neang and I decided that ‘someday’ we would like to adopt.”

Six years later this plan became a reality. “Traveling to Korea to pick Kaylah up was the trip of a lifetime. Nothing in this world can prepare you for the first time you lay eyes on your child,” Hayley added. “Kaylah is proof dreams really do come true. Being her mom is my proudest accomplishment.”

Editors Note: “Spotlight on Success” regularly features the achievements of Dillon’s adult adoptees.



Adult Adoptees

- Dillon International’s Tulsa office was honored this spring by a visit from Dr. Kim, Jin Sook, President of Eastern Social Welfare Society in Seoul. Dr. Kim is the daughter of ESWS founder, Dr. Kim, Duk Whang. While in Tulsa, she and Mrs. Kim, Tae Ok, director of Eastern’s Post-Adoption Services and Sponsorship Department, enjoyed an evening of fellowship with several Dillon International adult adoptees.



- Dillon Adoptee Melanie Chung-Sherman, Director of Adoptions for Dillon’s Texas office, was among a small group of Korean adoptees from Adoptees for Children (www.adoptees4children.org) honored to have dinner at the Washington, D.C. home of Korean Ambassador Lee, Tae Sik. “The most astounding and remarkable part of the evening was the realization that from our humble beginnings we were all sitting around a beautiful banquet table with the Korean Ambassador and his wife,” Melanie recalled. Ambassador Lee reminded the adoptees that they, too, were ambassadors of sorts. He and his wife shared, “Korea is your Motherland, but America is your Fatherland. You are ambassadors to both.”



- Korean Adoptees of Hawai’i (KAHI), a nonprofit organization based on O’ahu, will host its first-ever Asian Adoptee Film Festival, held in conjunction with the Asian Adult Adoptee Gathering in Honolulu from Oct. 10-13, 2008. For more information, visit the group’s website at www.kahawaii.org, or email info@KAHawaii.org.

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