

# CHILD LINK

A publication of Dillon International, Inc.

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

Spring 2008

## Little Things Mean a Lot: Family Fundraisers make Big Difference for Children

By Susan Serrano

Take a loving heart, a dash of volunteer spirit, and a heaping helping of creativity and you have the perfect recipe for making a difference in the lives of the world's children.

Dillon International is blessed to have some wonderful "cooks" who regularly employ this formula to raise funds for the agency's humanitarian aid and heritage programs. Just a few examples are highlighted here; we hope you'll be inspired to think of your own way of contributing to the welfare of the children we serve.



### Benefit Walk

A lifelong love of volunteering in her community and newfound passion for the grandchild her daughter and son-in-law are adopting from Vietnam prompted waiting grandmother Terri Codlin to organize a walk in her community to raise funds for orphanage playgrounds in Vietnam.

Although regulations prohibit direct monetary donations from immediate family members of those in the adoption process, it is acceptable for them to become involved in volunteer projects and their assistance with these efforts is invaluable, said Tonnie Dossier, Dillon International's associate director of development.

Codlin called upon her connections in the church, performing arts, media, and childcare community to get the word out about last summer's event and the "Child's Play" walk soon became the talk of her small Georgia town.

"Doing things for children is my passion, and to know we will leave a legacy for hundreds of children is very touching," she said of the successful fundraiser she hopes will turn into an annual event and serve as an inspiration to others to do similar projects.

"Child's Play helped me to focus on something other than the wait and was a positive way to channel those energies into something meaningful," added Codlin's

daughter, Meredith Strauss. "It is really important to me that we remember the children who are not being adopted and the thought of leaving a lasting contribution for those children means a great deal."



### Employer Funding

A presentation at a Dillon International China Heritage Camp sparked China adoptive dad Randy Rodgers to ask his employer, Wal-Mart, for a donation to help sponsor the camp the next year.

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Providing education and medical care for the children of Vietnam is one of Dillon's greatest ongoing fundraising goals. Seemingly small fundraisers, such as garage and bake sales, can make a big difference for children in the countries served by Dillon International.

**Examples of contributions that may seem small by American standards, but can achieve big results, include:**

- \$25 a month helps with job training for a high school student in Korea
- \$100 will pay for one year of school for a student in Vietnam
- \$180 will provide six months of physical therapy to a child in India
- \$360 provides a year of care for an abandoned child in Eastern Social Welfare Society's Jacob's Home
- Just over \$700 will feed, clothe, and provide medical care for a family in Vietnam for an entire year

# Congratulations

To the following families on their



*Ayla Kim (Korea) MO*



*Amelia Morgan (China)*



*Elliot-Sloan Cozad (China) AR*



*Noah Justus  
(Guatemala) OK*



*Macdalah, Abraham, Deborah  
Fry (Haiti) PA*



*Phoebe Brodine (Vietnam) KS*



*Raina Davidson (India) CO*



*Paisley Hopkins (India) AR*



*Binhson Hurley (Vietnam) OK*



*JD Shade (Korea) KS*



*Devi Ross (India) WA*

***A Daughter from China***

Mel and Lynn Askins  
Dana Campbell  
John Holmes and Jill Poland  
Greg and Debbie Johnsen  
Jonathan and Retta Kelley  
Casey and Mandi Morgan  
Brad and Kim Smith  
Jim and Teresa Westwood

***A Son from China***

Rod and Kelley Butcher  
John and Sherri Duvall  
Victor and Cindy Foster  
Jay and Jen Ingersoll  
Paul and Kim Lester

***A Daughter from Guatemala***

Carol and Jenni Leese  
Ken and Peggy Lewis  
Ken and Lori Schindler

***A Son from Guatemala***

Dwight and Beth Justus  
Gary and Kelly Lowe

***Siblings from Haiti***

Marc and Kristie Fry

***A Daughter from India***

Byron and Kim Brown  
Cliff and Tami Davidson  
Peter and Nancy Leschke  
Patrick and Julie Ross  
Roger and Karen Welsler

***A Son from India***

Shoby and Dolly John  
Tim and Shelly Kleiman  
Daniel and Kristy Labonte  
Agni and Adrienne Mitra  
Ronald and Sandra Ramcharran  
Eric and Priscilla Winkleblack

***A Daughter from Korea***

Chad and Ronni Fellers  
Todd and Debbie Heinz (twins)  
Bob and Mae Hong (sisters)  
Bum and Angela Kim  
Andrew and Helen Kim  
Myung and Heasook Lee  
Wendall and Heather Lee  
Doug and Margaret Momphard  
Mark and Gina Stanley  
Neang and Hayley Tuon  
Marc and Tami Zussman

*Adoptions*  
recent arrivals!

***A Son from Korea***

Hyeon Cheol and UI Suk Choi  
John and Kellie Dawson  
Michael and Mary Dreesen  
Jim and Jennifer Lokey  
Steve and Christine McCarthy  
Paul and Christi Shade  
Brad and Lisa Verdigets

***A Daughter from Vietnam***

John and Leigh Booth  
Cynthia Bravo  
Chris and Dianna Brodine  
Martin Godfrey and Karen McClellan  
Terence and Rebecca McGowan  
Shawn and Melanie Munn  
Joe Roman and Laura Farrell  
Ruth Stern  
Michael and Jessica Varn  
Kim Vojvoda  
Kirk and Tricia Woodliff

***A Son from Vietnam***

Edward and Cindy Brown  
David and Shelly Cline  
Johnny and Tina Cornelison  
Bill and Kim Evans  
Kathy Fountain  
Kim Hettel  
Chuck and Jean Anne Hodges  
Benjamin and Amanda Hurley  
Karl and Julie Klein  
Brian and Ellen Meehan  
Susan Murphy  
Chuck and Cindy Myers  
Carl and Kim Offhaus  
Steven and Christina Parkinson  
Daron and Melissa Pitts  
Al and Chris Shasteen  
Christopher Wagner and Stacy Jenison

# Pre-Teen Adoptees Connect Through New Group

By Alice Doyle



Children in the pre-teenage years are beginning to understand more about their adoption and experience even more questions at school. These children have not reached the angst of their teenage years, but they are starting the process of sorting out for themselves their own identity just as they begin to understand more about biology. At a younger age, they were just beginning to identify the differences between themselves and their peers in terms of race, but they are continuing to encounter questions, teasing, and possibly even bullying from their peers.



In an effort to help adopted children face these experiences, Dillon International is excited to offer a new program specifically for pre-teen adoptees. The Pre-Teen Group, facilitated by licensed social workers, reaches out to adoptees, ages eight to 12, from all countries. The pilot program began in the fall of 2007 and another session was held in early 2008. Both of these six-week sessions occurred in Tulsa but we are looking forward to expanding the program to our regional areas as well.



The goals of the group are to support internationally adopted children on an age-appropriate basis as they begin to explore adoption issues, enhance self-confidence and self-identity and build a support system of peers for internationally adopted children. The children have an opportunity to share with their peers on topics including Adoption and School, Race and Identity, Teasing and Bullying, and Family Tree Remix: How Do You Tell It? Participants will also have an opportunity to chat with older adoptees and learn from their experiences, as well as hear firsthand from a birth mother about her decision to make an adoption plan. Plenty of food, fellowship and fun are also incorporated into the sessions.



Check out [www.dillonadopt.com](http://www.dillonadopt.com) for dates of upcoming groups. If you have questions email [alice@dillonadopt.com](mailto:alice@dillonadopt.com). We hope your child will be able to attend in the future!

Have a cute pic you want to be in Childlink? Please email photos in jpeg format (300 dpi or greater) to [Rosalyn@dillonadopt.com](mailto:Rosalyn@dillonadopt.com). Stories or articles may be emailed to the same address.



## 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](mailto:rosalyn@dillonadopt.com) or mail them to Childlink Editor, Dillon International, 3227 E 31<sup>st</sup> St, Ste 200, Tulsa, OK, 74105.





2007 Marymount Univ. Grad Annika Young Mee Lee Meier (Korea) with her parents and husband



Theo and Harriet Lee (Korea) OR



Nicole and Natalie Abram (China) AR



Rebekah Hall (China) and her siblings- OK



Bailey Haney (Korea) and her Papa- TX



Bodie Duvall (China) OK



Cameron (Korea), Kennedy (Vietnam) and Jordan (Korea) Bayer OK



Robyn Katz (Korea) and Brian Hotchkiss on their wedding day



Abbey and Alex Thornton (China) OK



Abigail, Carter, and Dillon Skaggs (Korea) TX



Adam Roth-Tran (Korea) TX



Christopher Weingart (Guatemala) IN



2007 Texas Tech Graduate Kimberly Haller (Korea)

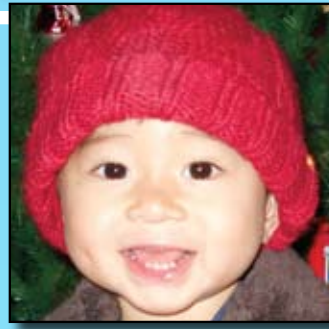
# Memorable Moments



*Charpentier family on Neil and Mary's 40th Anniversary*



*Emma and Gus McLellan monkey around (Korea) AR*



*Cole Nimmo (Vietnam) OK*



*Tylyn (India) and Gavin Asterino- WV*



*Maya Kotha (India) CO*



*Jacob, Kara, Joel, and Seth McAtee (Korea) MO*



*Gianna and Jada (Guatemala) Conover- IN*



*Marilyn and J.R. Ligon (Korea) TN*



*The March 2005 China travel group reunites in Silver Dollar City*

*"In the morning,  
O LORD, you hear  
my voice; in the  
morning I lay my  
requests before you and  
wait in expectation."*

*— Psalm 5:3*



*Lily and Lydia Nakka (India)*



*Kodra children on their first day of school (India) TX*



*Nicholas Wagner (Guatemala) KS*



*Rachael Lovell (China) crosses the finish line at Dillon's Run for the Children*

# Summer Fun **Can Include Heritage Camps**

Have you started making summer plans for your child? Hopefully, you haven't forgotten to include your child's Heritage Camp or Family Weekend on the schedule. (All camps and weekends are held in Tulsa, OK. Please refer to the Bulletin Board insert for dates.) Camp participants are immersed in the culture of their birth, with activities involving food, music, dance, and language. **Even if your child hasn't attended in previous years, it's not too late to start a new tradition.** Attending a heritage camp or family weekend doesn't just teach adoptees about the country where they were born; it is a unique time for them to be around other kids who look like them and have had similar experiences growing up as an international adoptee. As one participant explained, "I have friends back home, but they don't know how I feel and I can't explain it to them. But here it's different somehow. My friends know me without saying a word." Another camp attendee stated, "Discovering more about myself and other people like me

strengthens me and gives me a better appreciation of life."

Heritage camps are open to all family members, but center around adoptees and siblings, ages 4-12. Family weekends focus on cultural activities enjoyed by all family members. With childcare available and workshops for parents, a camp or a weekend can be an experience for the whole family. Knowing the benefits of these events, how can your child not take part? Registration information and scholarship applications can be found at [www.dillonadopt.com/postadopt.htm](http://www.dillonadopt.com/postadopt.htm) or email Nicole Lotz at [Nicole@dillonadopt.com](mailto:Nicole@dillonadopt.com).



*China Campers perform the Lantern Dance*



*Camp attendees learn about Guatemalan music from Dillon Dad Brad Weaver*

**"We loved all of it! We loved the variety of activities for the kids and the families. We really enjoyed volunteering and the opportunity to get to know the Dillon staff & other families."**



*No event is successful without volunteers!*



*Jerry Dillon Speaks to the crowd*

## Focus on Regional Offices: Arkansas

Dillon's Arkansas office hosted its seventh annual Christmas Party on Nov 20, 2007 at the Church at Rock Creek. The 230 people in attendance enjoyed Christmas music, food and remarks by honored guests Jerry and Deniese Dillon. The children were presented with gifts from Santa and his elves. Kim and Bryan Rousey, who have two daughters from China, received the annual Volunteer of the Year award in recognition of their many hours of volunteer work for the Arkansas office.



*The Rousey Family accepts their award*



**We want to stay in touch! Please send address, email and/or phone number changes to [rosalyn@dillonadopt.com](mailto:rosalyn@dillonadopt.com).**

continued from cover

The national retailer makes funds available to help community projects, Rodgers explained. The need for financial contributions to assist with China Heritage Camp “never dawned on me until it was mentioned that there was a need,” he recalled. “It reminded me I might be able to help the Dillon camp through this grant money. I think other families have access to things like this too, but many just don’t know about the need.”



Heritage camp provides a wonderful time for bonding, self-expression and, many times, life-changing experiences. While the individual camper tuition helps, more funds are needed to underwrite the camp expenses, Dosser said. “In addition, many employers offer a matching gift program. With the potential to double your personal contribution, isn’t it worth looking into?”



## Garage Sale

A school service project inspired Korean adoptee Laura Walters to raise money for medical care for children in Vietnam.

The Oklahoma teenager teamed up with a friend, whose father was raised in a Vietnamese orphanage, to organize a fundraising garage sale. “When people learned the garage sale was for charity, they were willing to pay more and didn’t try to bargain as much,” she recalled. “I even got some donations.”

## Funds Begun by Families

Other Dillon programs that are always in need of assistance include the Building Families Fund and the Endowment Fund.

The Building Families Fund is a grant program that helps unite children with their forever families. Donations to this fund are made available to encourage the adoption of waiting children.

Two caring families started Dillon’s Endowment Trust. Donations to this fund will help Dillon’s programs continue far into the future.

*These are just a few examples of how families and friends have assisted the children that Dillon serves. “When a family is organizing a fundraiser to assist Dillon’s programs, we encourage them to let us know about it in advance,” Dosser added.*

*“We can help by furnishing flyers, orphanCare International booklets, and program information for attendees.”*

*Whether it’s organizing a major event or asking for donations in lieu of birthday gifts, you really can make a difference in the lives of children.*

***If you are interested in having an event, or just need help getting started, please contact Dillon’s development department at [Development@dillonadopt.com](mailto:Development@dillonadopt.com).***



## All in the Family: Eastern Social Welfare Society Leadership Passed on to Dr. Kim’s Daughter

Dr. Kim, Do Young, president & CEO of Eastern Social Welfare Society in Seoul, South Korea, retired after dedicating the past 10 years to the enhancement of ESWS’s welfare services. Dr. Kim is the eldest son of ESWS founder and Chairman of the Board, Dr. Kim, Duk Whang.

Dr. Kim, Jin Sook, the only daughter of Dr. Kim, Duk Whang, assumed the leadership role of ESWS on November 1, 2007. Dr. Kim, Jin Sook has worked in various roles at ESWS for over 20 years. Her keen intelligence and drive to never stop learning motivated her to seek a Ph.D. in Education, which she received in 2006. Dr. Kim is ESWS’s seventh president. Her goal for the agency is to maintain her father’s vision of helping the less fortunate while expanding the types of services to accomplish this goal. A faithful, creative, and energetic woman, Dr. Kim will use her remarkable leadership skills coupled with her strong Christian faith to guide ESWS into a new era of child and family welfare services.

We at Dillon International have enjoyed our relationship with Dr. Kim, Do Young over the years and we wish him a fulfilling and prosperous future. We look forward to our continued excellent relationship with ESWS and working with Dr. Kim, Jin Sook to further ESWS’s welfare services into the next generation.



# Spotlight on Success: Michael Benzinger

By Susan Serrano

Dillon Adoptee Michael Benzinger is enjoying the spotlight of his birth country as an actor and model in South Korea.

Michael was adopted as an infant by Bill and Deborah Benzinger of New York, where he grew up with his older sister, Victoria.

He moved to South Korea two years ago in an effort to launch his budding career in the entertainment industry. "I decided I was going to live my life with no regrets," he explained. "I always wanted to be in front of the camera, as opposed to working behind the scenes, like I had in New York City. I figured I'd give modeling and acting in Korea a shot, since so many Korean-Americans have succeeded in Korea."

Since returning to his birth country, Michael has landed a starring role in a Baskin Robbins commercial, and has modeled for numerous companies including Pizza Hut, SHOW, and a well-known Korean cell phone and clothing company. "I realized I had achieved a very small taste of fame when some people have recognized me on the street on a few occasions," he said.

Michael, who has a Bachelor of Arts degree in television and video production from New York's Hofstra University and a Korean language certificate from Seoul National University, also works as an English interviewer and editor for Samsung.

The move to South Korea was a relatively easy transition, Michael said. "I already knew what it was like to live in Korea, since I had studied there while I was in college. So, I didn't have much culture shock when I came back," he recalled.

Although being away from family and friends in the United States can be difficult at times, "Korea feels like a second home for me since I have been here for so long," Michael said. "One positive aspect about living in Korea is being surrounded by people who look like me. Until college, I had no Korean friends at all. I think, while growing up, it is important to have friends of your ethnic background--especially if you're adopted. Now I have a lot of Korean/Asian friends."

*Editors Note: "Spotlight on Success" regularly features the achievements of Dillon's adult adoptees.*



# Adult Adoptees

• Six college-age adoptees were honored this summer with scholarships from the Korean American Association of Houston. The students are part of Open Arms, a support group for adoptive families founded by Dillon parents in the Houston area. The students from left to right are Allison Archer, Ginger St John accepting for son Ben, Christina Archer, Sam Karns, Jordan Smith and Matthew Carberry.



• **InKAS** provides Korean language scholarships to overseas Korean adoptees with a grant from the Ministry of Health and Welfare. Korean adoptees over the age of 14 are eligible to apply. Application details are available under the "News and Events" section of the organization's website, <http://www.inkas.org/>.

• **The "Korean Immersion Program"**  
The "Korean Immersion Program" for adult adoptees is operated by Inje University, in Gimhae, Korea. It provides a four-month stay in Korea with free room and board in a university residence hall, daily classes in Korean language and culture, and access to computer and fitness facilities on campus. More information can be found on the program's web site at <http://www.iihr.net> or by contacting Hee Jung Kim at [heejungkim79@hotmail.com](mailto:heejungkim79@hotmail.com).



*ATLAAS members receive a Korean cooking demonstration at their monthly meeting in Tulsa.*

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