



Aiding Adoption of Special Children Worldwide

The Perennial Path

Newsletter of the Brittany's Hope Foundation

Featured Family

"She's the one."

by Michele Heffner

I was six years old when two of my older siblings and I were adopted. Three years ago, my parents also adopted my younger brother. My husband, Don, has a brother who is adopted as well. Because of our personal experiences with adoption we always talked about adopting at least one child.

"We need to talk to that family."

We had our son, Jacob, in 2000 and in 2003 started trying to conceive our second child. We were in church one Sunday in July of 2003 when we saw the Abel family. God spoke to our hearts and at the same time in the service we turned to each other and said something like "We need to talk with that family."

After the service we approached the Abels and exchanged phone numbers and discussed meeting to talk about adoption and Brittany's Hope further. That is exactly what we did about a week or so later. Right away Don and I decided we wanted to adopt an international special needs child.

We started the homestudy paperwork, meetings, and physical exams in August 2003, and by the end of October the homestudy was complete. During this time we were also researching placement agencies and countries and their various adoption requirements. We were open to several different countries. Russia was not one of them because of the amount of time one has to spend in the country (3 weeks) and both parents have to travel. In fact, we were considering India because only one parent had to travel.



Don and Michelle Heffner with children Jacob and Katya.

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I immediately thought, "She's the one."

Throughout this entire process I was in contact with Candy Abel. In a conversation in October of 2003, she mentioned she had video and pictures of a little girl from Russia who was receiving a personal grant from Glenn (President of Heritage Builders) and Andrea Livelsberger. [see Andrea Livelsberger's article, "The Joy of Sponsoring a Child," page 2.] That night I picked the information to review thinking we would look at it but the answer would be no. Again God had different plans. I saw the video and pictures and immediately thought, *she's the one*.

By the end of October we had applied to Cradle of Hope Adoption Center, Inc. (the

agency Ekaterina or Katya, as we call her, was placed with) and immediately began to assemble our dossier for Russia. Don left for the first trip to Russia to meet our daughter on December 7th. He returned home December 13th in love and with lots of pictures and video for Jacob and me. February 20, 2004, Don and I flew to Russia to adopt and bring Katya home. We returned home March 6, 2004.

September 6, 2004, marked the six-month anniversary of our entire family. Sure there was an adjustment especially at first and there have been challenges but there also has been great joy. It is great to see her experience things for

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"She's The One!"

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the first time, to see her grow and become attached to family members. It is also wonderful to see how she and Jacob get along. In her eyes, Jacob is the best and Jacob thinks she is great too. He has on several occasions said, "Thank you for bringing me a sister from Russia." In November we celebrated her third birthday, and this past Christmas was a joyous occasion with Katya in our family .

Without Brittany's Hope (and the corporate sponsors like Heritage Builders and the donations Brittany's Hope receives from everyday people) we never would have been able to adopt Katya. We are a one-income family because I am a full-time mother. To cover the cost of adoption we used our savings, the Brittany's Hope grant, and money raised through a fundraiser. The fundraiser was a huge success because of all the support we received from family, friends, and neighbors. We cannot imagine Katya (and the many other children who have yet to be adopted) growing up in an orphanage. God's calling is often ignored or postponed, but God will not ask more from us than we are capable of doing. So if you feel a "pang" in your heart and a weight on your mind, don't ignore it.

With much gratitude to many people, Michele, Don, Jacob & Katya Heffner



Katya putting on lipstick.

By choice, we have become a family, first in our hearts, and finally in breath and being. Great expectations are good; great experiences are better.

*— Richard Fischer
Adoptive parent*

Special Guest Feature

The Joy of Sponsoring a Child

by Andrea Livelsberger of Heritage Builders, Corporate Sponsor of Katya Heffner

It is certain that your attention and likely your heart are captured when you hear the story of Dave and Candy Abel's family, their journey, and the birth of Brittany's Hope.

While working for a year on the expansion of Stone Gables, my own family was privileged to witness daily the wonder of Dave's and Candy's gift of love and how dramatically it changed the lives of the children they embrace as family.

The Abels' example of changing the world "one child at a time" made a profound impact on our lives. We are presented with opportunities to help the world in so many ways. For us, it has always been children that tug on our "heartstrings" and also bring us our greatest joy! It was a perfect fit for our hearts to be a part of Brittany's Hope through sponsorship.

"It was a perfect fit for our hearts to be a part of Brittany's Hope through sponsorship."

We learned quickly that while sponsorship is definitely necessary, it also is definitely the easy part of helping a child in need. Despite the hard work of Brittany's Hope, our first sponsorship was placed on one beautiful child for whom a loving family could not be found, and then on a second child. That was heartbreaking. I still grieve and pray for those children and wonder how different their lives might be today...if only.



Through these disappointments, I have come to appreciate the ultimate gift... that of loving and dedicated people who open their hearts and their lives to a child. How special they are! How deep is their love! How strong is their commitment!

That first sponsorship was eventually placed on Ekaterina (Katya). It wasn't long before Candy informed us that the Heffner family wanted Katya to be part of their lives. We were thrilled, yet we had no idea how intense "thrilled" could be!

We talked to the Heffners after their decision was made. Shelly kept us updated during the wait between Don's first trip to meet Katya in Russia and Don and Shelly's return trip to bring her home. It was wonderful to hear how much Katya was wanted and already loved. How miraculous that this little girl so in need of a family was going to fill a family's need for a child!

When Katya arrived home, we were flooded with emotions we never expected. We were elated and overjoyed...and now we knew what it meant to be

thrilled! We have met Katya and her parents and her brother Jacob. Our own hearts are filled with love for them!

Candy Abel says (and I agree with her) that there are no words to express the feelings of giving birth to a child, and there are no words to express the feelings of bringing home an adopted child. Let us tell you, personally, that there are no words to describe the feelings of being ANY part of sponsoring the joining of a child with a loving family! The gift we thought we were giving turned out to be a most precious gift received!

Feature

Brittany's Hope Foundation Marks the Start of its Milestone Fifth Year

by Candace Abel

Greetings and welcome to 2005!

Brittany's Hope has reached its milestone fifth year! Children we sponsored as infants are now in Kindergarten; older recipients have become accomplished athletes and scholars. One day soon they will be leaving for college! Our recipient children have a future simply because their lives include the gift of a family. The majority of abandoned children will never have a future. It is the family who nurtures the dreams and potential within; the family who offers the safety net of loving arms when they fly from the nest. Of the 9 million children waiting in institutions, less than 25,000 get adopted to the US each year.

Children who are not adopted will "age-out" of the orphanage with very little resources to cope with life on their own. Some will turn to prostitution, crime or drug and alcohol use; the lucky ones will find low-paying jobs. Many experience depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and have difficulty with developing personal relationships. Abandonment hurts for a lifetime.

We're hard at work on a youth street center

Many of our wonderful affiliate agencies are acutely aware of the problem and are hard at work to help de-institutionalized youth function in society. Maine Adoption Placement Services of Houlton, Maine runs a vocational program in Vietnam for abandoned youths. Young adults and teenagers board there while completing certificates of education in English and computer, skills needed in the work place. We have joined with MAPS to renovate a street center where these children reside. The center will offer more than clean water and meals; it will offer the blessing of self-worth with personal space and educational support.

We are also developing a duffle bag project for "aging-out" institutionalized children. We plan

to fill 500 bags with essentials such as clothes and toiletries to be handed to these brave ones as they face the world; our bag may offer some comfort to their lonely hearts. Watch our website for details on how to help.

Cribs for Kids continues

We will continue with our Cribs for Kids project as well. In 2004, we replaced the damaged cribs in the Jingzhang orphanage in China and built 30 custom bunk beds with individual storage space for older orphans residing in the Cherith Center in war-torn Sierra Leone. We will use the same design to build beds for the street center and have already built the beds in a Vietnam home for orphans. I expect the requests for this program will only increase with the number of

Tsunami orphans expected to cram into centers. In addition to these projects, we will continue with our main focus; finding homes for special needs waiting children.

We sponsored 38 children in 2004

In 2004 we had the opportunity to advocate for 38 wonderful children such as Tommy from Lithuania, Carlos who is deaf, little person Ruslan and baby Lanh who has HIV. We celebrated happy homecomings including our heart babies, Tyler adopted by single mother Amy, and Diana from Kazakhstan who now lives in Virginia. We saw several sibling groups, the four Andreyev sibs, the three Kochnev brothers, and sisters Victoria, Veronica, and Mariana find their forever families. A number of our Sierra Leone children, Ansumana, Sirah, Ansu, Benjamin, and Kaday are now US citizens rather than war orphans. We all wept with joy when vision-impaired Oleg came home and sisters Dianna and Lubov found a family after years of waiting.

It has been another amazing year of miracles and I pray 2005 will be the same as we continue to grow in God's grace.

In peace,
Candace Abel

"Cribs for Kids" Update A Congregation Reaches Out

by Mary Jean Risser, Board Member


*"The children were nestled
all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugarplums
danced in their heads." ---*

What a safe, secure, and heart-warming scene as described by Clement C. Moore.

On the other hand, can you imagine a child sleeping on a bed of rails, NO mattress, NO pillow, and NO sheets? Can you imagine a child spending twenty-four hours each day in this environment with NOTHING to do?

Children from St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Elizabethtown, PA under the leadership of Linda Kaylor, decided to give their nickels and dimes toward the purchase of cribs for less fortunate children. One mattress, bedding, and "busy box" cost \$100. For each crib purchased, a doll would be placed in a crib located in the Gathering Space of the church.

Soon, the entire congregation became involved and the nickel and dime project turned into thousands of dollars. Funds amounting to over \$4,000 were donated to the Brittany's Hope "Cribs for Kids" campaign. Now, God's special children could "nestle all snug in THEIR beds."

Thank you to all the children and adults at St. Paul's who joined hearts to make a difference in the lives of children! 



Special Feature

A “Civil War Christmas” at Stone Gables

by Debra Miller, Board Member

On November 6th & 7th, 2004, David and Candace Abel opened their home, “Stone Gables” for the third annual House Tour. With the amazing support of our sponsors and the community, enough funds were raised to cover grants for *nineteen* children. The phenomenal success was due in large part to the 150 Civil War re-enactors and Living Historians who worked tirelessly during the weekend creating authentic scenes throughout the Abels’ home and surrounding grounds. Thank you all!

The house was decorated in styles popular during the Civil War. Living historians dressed in period gowns and uniforms played out Christmastime scenes.



Father Christmas and Alice Clouser share a hug.

The formal living room, decorated by Donecker’s Fine Furniture, featured officers on leave from the war spending Christmas with their wives. A small “table top” tree, common during the 1800’s, graced a corner by the roaring fire.

In the dining room, President Abraham Lincoln enjoyed a Christmas meal with his Generals. Sandy Martin of Country Designs by Sandy Martin decorated this room with greens, fruits and natural materials.

In the kitchen, beautifully decorated by Alice Clouser and Candace Abel, guests were greeted by the wonderful aroma of meals being prepared. At the kitchen table, a scene straight out of *Little Women* took place: a mother and her daughters, grateful for what they have while Father is off at



Kent Courtney plays troubadour to Emily Abel. (All photos courtesy of Crystal Cooper Photography.)

war, prepare to share their simple meal with the poor widow from down the street.

The highlight of the Great Room was a stunning 14 foot Christmas tree, decorated by Kristy Abela of Kristabel’s Timeless Boutique. Children representing the many orphans of war played with their new toys by the fireplace, and families enjoyed a time of happiness while the war was forgotten for a day.




President Lincoln reviewing the troops.

The Great Hall featured a tree decorated with lovely sugared fruits. It truly looked good enough to eat! Mrs. Linda Umberger was the creator of this exquisite vision.

One of the most heartwrenching re-enactments took place in David Abel’s office. A reenactor portrayed Major Ballua writing a letter home to his wife. This brave soldier was killed on the field of battle before the letter reached her. David’s office and the Garden Room were decorated by the talented Jim Showers.

The Guest Suite was turned into a hospital, where compassionate women served as nurses caring for the sick and wounded. Alice Clouser provided the period decorations for this room.

Guests strolled the grounds to visit the soldiers’ encampments, horses, and Gatlin Gun demonstrations. Musicians greeted arrivals with music reminiscent of that heard in the soldiers’ camps.

We hope you’ll join us at the next House Tour on November 5th and 6th, 2005. If you are interested in participating in this event, please contact us at 717-367-9614 or email us from our web site at <http://www.brittanyshope.org>. With your help and support, we look forward to seeing you at our fourth annual spectacular House Tour success! 

“Civil War Christmas” Photo Album: Share Our Memories!



Civil War reenactors fire the cannon. For a small donation, visitors were able to fire a cannon themselves. The booming of the cannons were heard throughout Elizabethtown.



This Civil War Santa Claus delighted the Reber girls. Look at those smiles!



Musicians gearing up for the Friday evening outdoor ball.



These ladies enjoyed a simple holiday meal.



President Abraham Lincoln and First Lady Mary Todd Lincoln were served dinner with officers in the formal dining room.



Swords drawn, officers arrive on horseback in preparation for the battle reenactment.

Feature

Brittany's Buds: *Granted Children Waiting For Families*



Andrey lives in Eastern Europe and was born on May 1, 1995. He is bright and active and very social. He has a slight heart disorder and developmental delays. His grant is \$7,500. If you can open your heart and home to give him a forever family so he can blossom, contact Cara Helbert with Across the World Adoptions at 1-800-619-5607.



WP-642 was born in Eastern Europe on June 19, 1999. He is silly and bright and has been diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy. He is able to walk unassisted. He is waiting for his forever family to take him home. He has a grant of \$7,000. If you think he is your son, contact Cindy Harding with World Partners Adoption at 770-962-7860.



Brima is a handsome boy from Sierra Leone was born on November 25, 1997. He is malnourished and hoping to find a family that he can truly call his own. He has a grant of \$7,500. If you feel that he is the special child you have been searching for, please contact Cindy Boody of MAPS at 207-532-9358.



Abbey and Dotty, adorable sisters from Sierra Leone are searching for their forever family! Abbey was born on January 6, 1998 and Dotty was born on March 17, 1999. A \$10,000 grant has been placed on these lovely little girls! If you feel that adding two beautiful daughters to your family will make it complete, please contact Cindy Boody with MAPS at 207-532-9358.



Rafael was born in March of 1997 in the Philippines. He is a sweet child who gets along well with his peers. He has a diagnosis of mental retardation with limited speech. He is in a loving foster home where he loves to watch cartoons, take walks and enjoys being a passenger on a bicycle. He has a grant of \$7,500. If you think he is the child for you, contact Jane Cramer of Pearl S. Buck International at 215-249-0100, ext. 148.



WP-859 is a sweet little girl living in Eastern Europe. She was born on January 4, 2001. She has an unknown condition that has caused her to have allover low muscle tone. It may have been polio, however where she lives she is not able to get a diagnosis. She is sweet and quiet, and hopes for a family who can accept her special needs. She has a grant of \$7,000. If you can open up your heart and home to her, contact Cindy Harding with World Partners Adoption at 770-962-7860.



Kadiatu (born December 9, 1997) and **Mariatu** (born December 29, 1993) are lovely sisters from Sierra Leone. Their father was killed in their country's civil war. They were abandoned by their mother to their uncle, who is a poor farmer with four children of his own and cannot provide for the sisters. They are malnourished and longing for the love of a family. **They have a grant of \$10,000.** If Kadiatu and Mariatu are your special little girls, please contact Cindy Boody with MAPS at 207-532-9358.



Kim is a wonderful little boy from South Korea born on April 14, 2004. He was born premature at 34 weeks and has Atrial Septal Defect and Peripheral Vascular Disease. **He has a grant of \$7,500.** If you feel that he is the little boy you have been searching for, please contact Angela Unjin Ko with welcome House Adoptions at 215-249-0100, ext. 118.



Tommy, born on January 13, 2000, lives in Eastern Europe. He has arthrogryposis, a muscle disorder that causes multiple joint contractures at birth. **He has a grant of \$7,500.** If you think he is your son, contact Janie Van Dyke with Bethany Christian Services at 1-800-652-7082.



Marina and Kristina (twins born November 14, 2000) and younger brother **Aleksey** (born February 2, 2002) are wonderful siblings from Russia. Marina was born missing her right eye and left forearm and hand, but otherwise all three children are healthy. They have a much older brother who lives with their grandmother, and long for a home and family of their own. **They have a grant of \$15,000.** Please consider opening your heart and home to these three sweet children. For more information, please contact Linda Perilstein of Cradle of Hope at 301-587-4400.

Every child deserves a loving family.

Special Feature

Brittany's Blossoms: Sunbeams in Our Garden



Sweet little **Lanh** was born on November 10, 2003. She is HIV positive and lives in a specialized AIDS children's home in Vietnam. She is healthy at this time and is meeting all of her milestones. Lanh is receiving the typical HIV drug treatment. She has a grant of \$9,000. If you feel you can open your heart and home to her, contact Helen Levesque with MAPS at 207-532-9358.



Jin Soo is a sweet little boy born on February 20, 2003. He has a partial cleft palate and polydactyly (extra digits) on both hands and feet, for which he received surgery in August 2004. He has other medical issues as well. He has a grant of \$10,000. If you can open your heart and home to this special little boy, please contact Angela Unjin Ko with Welcome House Adoption at 215-249-0100, ext. 118.

Some countries do not allow publication of adoptable children's photos or names. Information about the children listed below is available by contacting Holly Taylor of La Vida International at 1-800-513-1910.

"Lily" — Sweet little "Lily" was born on September 11, 2000. She has been diagnosed with Hepatitis B, but she is healthy and happy. She has a grant of \$3,000. If you can open your heart and home to this beautiful little girl, please contact Holly Taylor with La Vida International at 800-513-1910.

"Michael" — is a special little boy born on April 6, 2001. He has a cleft palate and a cleft lip. He has a grant of \$5,000. If you feel that he is the little boy you have been searching for, please contact Holly Taylor with LaVida International at 800-513-1910.

"Lisa" — is a sweet little girl born on April 11, 2003. She has a cleft palate and cleft lip, but is otherwise healthy. She has a grant of \$5,000. If you can open your heart and home to this special little girl, please contact Holly Taylor with LaVida International at 800-513-1910.

"Julie" — Born on November 17, 2002, "Julie" has Robinow's ("Infant Face" or "Blurred Face") Syndrome. She has a grant of \$6,600. If you can offer her the love of a family, please contact Holly Taylor with LaVida International at 800-513-1910.

"Diana" — is a beautiful little girl born on September 20, 1998. She has been diagnosed with congenital heart disease and has been waiting for a family for over a year. She has a grant of \$5,000. If you can open your heart and home to this special little girl, please contact Holly Taylor with LaVida International at 800-513-1910.

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Candace Abel, Editor
Deborah Ellis, Art Director
Contributors: Michele Heffner, Andrea Livelsberger, Candace Abel, Mary Jean Risser, Deb Miller, Lori Geres, and Bonnie Rohrer.

Many thanks to Crystal Cooper Photography for her beautiful Civil War Christmas photos.

*If I had my child to raise all over again,
 I'd fingerprint more, and point the
 finger less.*

*I'd do less correcting, and more connecting.
 I'd take my eyes off my watch, and watch
 with my eyes.*

*I would care to know less, and know to
 care more.*

*I'd take more hikes and fly more kites.
 I'd stop playing serious, and seriously play.
 I would run through more fields and gaze
 at more stars.*

*I'd do more hugging and less tugging.
 I would be firm less often, and affirm much
 more.*

*I'd build self-esteem first, and the house
 later.*

*I'd teach less about the love of power, and
 more about the power of love.*

*— from "Full Esteem Ahead"
 by Diane Loomans*

Some countries do not allow publication of adoptable children's photos. Information about the children listed below is available by contacting Janie Van Dyke of Bethany Christian Services at 1-800-652-7082.

Miguel is a happy toddler born on June 19, 2002 with Downs Syndrome. He lives in Columbia and resides in a foster home. He is looking for his forever family to take him home! He has a grant of \$6,000. If you feel he is your special son, please contact Janie Van Dyke of Bethany Christian Services at 1-800-652-7082.

Adorable **Jhon** was born in Columbia on January 5, 2000 at 33 weeks. He has partial paralysis on his left side due to Cerebral Palsy and some speech delays. He has a grant of \$5,000. If you feel he is the child you have been searching for, please contact Janie Van Dyke of Bethany Christian Services at 1-800-652-7082.

Maria is a sweet little girl from Columbia born on October 11, 2004. She was born with Spina Bifida and has recently been diagnosed with arthrogryposis, a muscle disorder that causes multiple joint contractures at birth. She also has hip dysplasia and club feet. She has a grant of \$10,000. If this little girl is tugging at your heart strings, please contact Janie Van Dyke of Bethany Christian Services at 1-800-652-7082.

Special Feature

A Wish For Wings

by Lori Geres, proud mom of Roman

One day, I woke up and realized that it was time. It was time for me to realize my dream of becoming a mother. I had just lost my last remaining parent, and was alone. I had become an orphan, I couldn't shake the feeling. For years, I had thought and planned to adopt a child, but there was always something in the way. My work, my home, the timing wasn't right.

But now, the time had come. I started in January 2003, not realizing that within a year I would find my son on the other side of the world.

I didn't know I was looking for Roman. He found me. I was solidly in the middle of the adoption process, scouring for paperwork, and shaking my head, wondering what I had gotten myself into.

It was early March, and I was at my desk at the hospital where I work reading over emails that had piled up over the course of a day. One caught my eye, "Where are Roman's parents?" It was from my social worker here in Denver. I opened the email, and read about a 7 year old boy, from Siberia with Hepatitis B. He was born in May, the same month as my father, whom I had just lost.

Roman had come to the US as a camper through Cradle of Hope, but his host family had made the decision not to adopt him. He was back in the Siberian orphanage, waiting.

Where would I find the money?

Brittany's Hope, a private foundation had granted \$7,500 toward his adoption. I thought "That certainly would help". Although I had inherited part of my father's estate, I still had not realized the funds to help with the adoption costs. Where would I find the money to complete this adoption?

All that aside, the moment I clicked open his photo, I knew. There he was, clutching a handle in an amusement park car. A ghost of a smile that seemed to ask what would be his future?

Can I do this?

I printed the photo, the grainy black and white reproduction did not diminish the sweet look in his eyes. I wondered, "What do I do now?" I emailed my social worker, and asked "What do you think?" Her response was guarded, "He is an older child", true, older than the toddler I thought I had wanted to adopt. "He has hepatitis B" Yes, he did, but what did that mean? "He is awfully cute though" Boy, there was no getting away from that, he was a cute kid!

I requested more information through Cradle of Hope, and thus began another journey... Was this the child that was meant for me? What did I know about adopting an older child? Didn't they have trouble with attachment? And how about hepatitis B? How do you live with someone with a chronic infectious disease?

I wrestled with these questions and more. I asked for opinions, thoughts, advice. I weeded through so many conflicting emotions. I would stare at this one photo of Roman and wonder,

"Can I do this?" "Am I being fair to this child?"

I emailed the Brittany's Hope Foundation, and checked out their website. This foundation spoke to my heart. "Each child deserves a home" regardless of the labels attached to them. This stayed with me throughout every restless night. Roman deserved a home. Brittany's Hope was making that possible for me.

"Yes, this is your son."

I prayed. I prayed more than I had ever before. I listened for guidance, I looked for signs. But in the end, it was my heart that fluttered the truth, "Yes... this is your son". My son. And now, I am his Mother, actually, his Mama.

I will forever remember the first time I saw him, in the office of the education minister in Tyumen, Siberia. He was in a purple outfit, his hair still short, his eyes dark and darting. "It's Roman" I whispered to myself, "my son." From that moment, both our lives changed. No longer were we orphans. We were now a family.

This dream come true was made possible by the incredible support of both Cradle of Hope Adoption Center, and Brittany's Hope. The grant given by Brittany's Hope took care of the foreign adoption fees, the fees that orphanage's require for any foreigner that adopts a Russian child. It made the difference in making my dream of being a mother come true.

Brittany's Hope is a special organization. It is a foundation that is truly making a difference in the lives of so many children. Mine is just one story, one family made, one future restored, one love story written.

Roman is now a happy, excited 2nd grader, who loves his dogs and shares his bed with his kitty cat Riley. He is a Cub Scout, a scientist, an artist, and a demon on a bike. He loves to be read to while he's in the tub, and wishes for wings so he can fly.

Brittany's Hope has given him those wings.. I can't wait to see the heights to which he will soar!

Music Box Raffle Winner!

— a letter from Bonnie Rohrer, winner of the Porter Music Box Raffle.

I want to thank you for the beautiful music box I won in the special raffle for Brittany's Hope.

I am originally from Oxford, PA and spend a lot of time visiting there. For over ten years I have been drooling over a music box I knew I could never have – like a child with their nose pressed up against a store window at Christmas. I cannot relate to you the excitement at receiving that phone call on Friday evening.

The music box arrived and I have also received additional discs. My children are thrilled, as they will have no problem buying me gifts for the rest of my life.

I especially would like to thank Emily for picking my name. I have seen the pictures of her and she is beautiful. I have read your brochure and realize what special people you all are.

Thank you again for making a dream come true and introducing me to Brittany's Hope.



**A hundred years from now
It will not matter what my bank
account was,
The sort of house I lived in,
Or the kind of car I drove...
But the world may be different
Because I was important in the
life of a child.**

Feature

Brittany's Blooms: We're Home!

Veronica, Marina and Victoria [Kazakhstan] are all smiles with big sister Meghan. >>



Shen-Hung's [Taiwan] happy smile says it all.



Tyler's [China] mom is so proud of her sweet, bright and wonderful child.



Anna (center, bottom) [Russia] spent her first American Christmas in style with her sisters.



Stephanie [China] poses in a gorgeous traditional dress.



Christiana [Korea] loves her big brothers! All three children were a pleasure to everyone at the Civil War Christmas Home Tour. <<

Cais Frances [China] on a wooden pony at her new home. >>



Spotlight on Brittany's Hope Board Members

A Teacher and A Banker

by Candace Abel

Q. What do teacher Mary Jean Risser and banker Cathleen Miller have in common?

A. They are both dear longtime friends of mine and devoted to the children of Brittany's Hope. Together they form an essential part of our work!



Mary Jean Risser

Mary Jean Risser is a lively, young-at-heart woman who has served on the board since its inception in January 2000. She is involved with the Fundraising Committee and co-chairs our home tour fundraiser each year. She is a regular contributor to our newsletter and as a teacher, serves as our resident proofreader. I describe Mary Jean as someone who has the patience of a saint, the disposition of sunshine, and the kindness of Santa Claus! Her enthusiasm, energy, and devotion to our work is extraordinary.

In addition to her work on the board, she volunteers at the local Masonic Retirement Community. Mary Jean reads to residents, takes them for strolls, or simply visits to brighten their day. She is an active member of her church, and chairs the local Shoebox Project through Samaritan's Purse. When that project wraps up, she and her husband Jerry head to Samaritan's Purse's main location to pack Shoeboxes from the rest of the United States! Now that her adopted sons, Gary and Tim are married, she loves to spend time with her three grandsons.

As a new graduate of Elizabethtown College, Mary Jean took a position teaching 1st grade at the local elementary school. During her

second year of teaching, I was fortunate to be one of her students. I was frightened to begin school, but Mary Jean quickly put me at ease. I remember truly loving my year with "Mrs. Risser". It became the beginning of a lifelong relationship, one that has blossomed and grown over the years. Today, I no longer call her "Mrs. Risser"; I call her Mary Jean, my dear friend.



Cathy Miller, right, with her children.

Cathleen Miller is another "lifer" board member at Brittany's Hope since arriving on the scene in January 2000! With her knack for numbers and expertise in accounting, she was a natural fit for Treasurer of our organization. She has served diligently for the past 5 years by keeping careful records, making deposits, paying bills, balancing accounts, generating reports and budgets, and issuing receipts for tax-purposes. Brittany's Hope is extremely blessed by Cathy's personal contribution which goes well above what is expected of the treasurer position. Her concise and efficient work saves us valuable resources which are better spent on helping waiting children.

Cathy is also a part of the Fundraising Committee and co-chairs the exhausting home tour fundraiser with Mary Jean. She applies a "hands-on" approach to this important fundraiser by greeting visitors at the front door and informing them of the reason behind the fundraiser. They may have come to see a decorated mansion, but by the time our visitors leave the tour, Cathy has educated them about the wonderful opportunities in adoption! This year, Cathy was again in her usual place at the front door of the tour, wearing a beautiful Civil War era gown, complete with uncomfortable

corset. She was heard to sigh, "Anything for the cause!"

Cathy works full time in her position at Susquehanna Bank, traveling a great deal with her job. She has been busy on the home front as well. Last year her son Jason married his college sweetheart, and soon her daughter Amy will also walk down the aisle. In the little spare time she has, Cathy enjoys reading, traveling with friends, and decorating her adorable house.

Cathy and I have been friends since our high school days when she was a cute, perky cheerleader. She is still cute and perky and still cheering, but these days she sends her "cheers" to encourage the work at Brittany's Hope. I am deeply grateful for the gift of her wonderful friendship!

Mary Jean and Cathy... a teacher and a banker... what do they have in common? The power to change the world one child at a time!!

Handmade Dolls For Sale

Visit www.brittanyshope.org/dolls.html to see these gorgeous porcelain dolls in handcrafted dresses.

The dolls are handmade by Alice Clouser, Vice President of Brittany's Hope. Alice spends months meticulously painting each of their porcelain faces and bodies, designing and crafting the costumes and accessories.

100% of the proceeds from the sales go to Brittany's Hope Foundation to sponsor special needs children.



"Kathleen" is one of many beautiful dolls for sale.



**Brittany's
HOPE**

Brittany's Hope Foundation

1000 N. Market Street

Elizabethtown, PA 17022

(717) 367-9614

Aiding Adoption of Special Children Worldwide



**100% of your donations are used to place
special needs children with loving families.**

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