

Featured Family – The Blocks

Life With Antonio... Who Would Have Known?

by Rose Block, Board Member

Life with Antonio... who would have known? I knew our family had enough love to share and I knew there was a little boy in Guatemala who needed a family to love him, but what I didn't know was just how much this little guy would bless our lives in the days, weeks, and months since we have brought him home.

This love affair started unexpectedly as Joe and I were tossing around the idea of another child. We already had four beautiful biological children, two boys and two girls, but something kept telling me maybe one more. We were talking for months about another biological child when all of a sudden Antonio came into our life. I had seen his picture two times prior—once in an email from Candace, and again at a board meeting when we decided not to place a grant on Antonio because he was still only eight months old at the time and had no mental or physical disabilities.

The second time he was referred to Brittany's Hope he was 12 months old and



still not matched. We decided to place a grant on him. Our board meeting was held the day before the Walk of Love in 2005. Upon seeing his picture for a third time, a tugging came on my heart. I still never imagined or thought adoption would be the answer for us.

It was the following day, however, when I was walking down to the track for the Walk of Love that I fell in love with the whole idea of adoption. The Stern Family had arrived for the walk and I was showing them the way to the track. Little Lianne from China reached up and took my two little fingers and walked side by side with me. At that point I knew this was for us. I knew I could love another child just as much as if I gave birth to him/her. I knew adoption was the way we were to go for another child. I shared my heart and my story with Joe and he too came on board

one hundred percent. Within the week we had started the paperwork and the adventure began.

On The Other Side of Adoption

It took nine months for the process to be complete. This adoption was very much like a pregnancy for me. It was just a little in reverse. We did the hard labor first (all the paperwork, home study, fingerprinting and preparing the dossier) and then the waiting began. It was really interesting for me to be on the other side of adoption. Being on the board at Brittany's Hope we do a lot of fundraising to reduce the cost of adoption for recipient families and now I was one of those families and was seeing first hand what they have to go through to complete the process. The love and commitment for a child has to be there in order to persevere through the process

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Life With Antonio: continued from page 1
and paperwork. I certainly have a new perspective on adoptive parents.

We spent nine months praying for Antonio, and anticipating his homecoming. We even found ourselves praying for the foster family who had cared for Antonio since birth. We knew it would be hard for them to say goodbye. Andrew, Ashley, Michael and Sarah talked about him a lot and felt he was their brother from the very beginning.



Ashley, Antonio, Andrew, Sarah, and Michael Block

An Overwhelming Sense of Blessing

I had a chance to travel to Guatemala in February to meet our new son. I was amazed at what a happy little boy he was. We bonded instantly and saying goodbye after a few days was much harder than I anticipated. I cried all the way home on the plane but realized my tears were not sad tears, but the tears that I had shed four times before. They were the same tears of joy and an overwhelming sense of blessing that I had cried after the birth of each of my biological children.

It was February 22nd when I finally received the best phone call of my life. Amy from Across the World Adoptions called to tell me we had gotten our invitation to travel! Andrew and I jumped up and down and hugged and squealed. It was really happening. Antonio was coming home!

The embassy usually gives families a week or two notice to prepare for travel before their embassy date. We had 3 days! I couldn't wait to tell Joe that we were finally going to Guatemala. He was in Florida with his dad and I quickly dialed the number to share the good news. My joy changed to sorrow as I learned his father had just passed away.

A Rollercoaster of Emotion

What a rollercoaster of emotion to get the best and the worst phone calls within five minutes. I flew to Florida to attend

the funeral and then Joe and I took a plane from Miami to Guatemala City the following day. I knew that Antonio would bring much healing to our family. We all loved Joe's dad dearly and the kids were going to miss their pop-pop. Bringing a toddler into our family was God's way of helping us get through the pain.

Our stay in Guatemala was short and we were on our way home with our new son within just a few days. The other kids had fallen in love with him 9 months

earlier and seemed to have an instant bond to their new brother. Antonio came into our family and was one of us from the very beginning. One day as we were traveling in the car I was talking with the children and just telling them that all 5 of them were the same in my heart. And although I did not carry Antonio in my belly I loved him just as much as if I had. My daughter, Ashley responded with one of the most special replies I have heard. She said, "Well Mommy, you did kind of carry him inside, because God laid him on our hearts." She was right, God had laid him on our hearts and now he was our son and part of our family.

One of the Most Beautiful Sounds

When I put Antonio in bed at night I hold him and sway back and forth while singing "Jesus Loves Me" to him. I had done this for several nights when he first came home. And then one night as I was singing I stopped to enjoy one of the most beautiful sounds I have ever heard. Our four other children had heard me singing and had come into the room and were singing with me. I just stood there and soaked up the beautiful sound of the children singing "Jesus Loves Me" to their brother.

Antonio makes us laugh and brings so much joy into our household. As soon as he sees his daddy he yells "Daddy!" and runs up to him and proceeds to tell him

about his day. He speaks in a language that I call Spanish/American Gibberish, but he knows what he is saying even if we don't understand a word. Antonio has been home for five months and is learning so much with every day. He is a very smart little boy and loves anything with wheels on it, especially if it makes noise and has lights. He loves all of his siblings and enjoys having them close by. They completely love having him in our family and enjoy teaching him new things.

When I was writing this story I asked each person in our family to tell me what they think about Antonio. Here is what they had to say:

Joe: "I love him very much. It's been a very rewarding experience and I enjoy having him as part of our family."

Andrew (Age 12): "He's a really, really cool kid. I love him a lot!"

Ashley (Age 10): "He's funny! I love playing with him."

Michael (Age 8): "I'm glad he sleeps in my room."

Sarah (Age 5) "I love having a little brother."

Joe has always known my love for children and was always a little concerned each time I went to a Brittany's Hope board meeting, knowing that I might come home with one of them on my heart. He was right and three years into my association with Brittany's Hope we have one of those very special children as our own. Going through the adoption process and now being a mom to an international child has given me an even greater passion for the work we do.

I encourage anyone who wants to be truly blessed in their life to take part in Brittany's Hope, a foundation that is making a difference in this world, by making a donation, taking part in one of our events, volunteering on the board, or better yet, stepping up to adopt one of many, very special children waiting for a forever family. ::



Rose, Antonio, and Joe Block

Have you heard?

Brittany's Hope Foundation has partnered with an Independent Beauty consultant of Mary Kay® to bring you the number one selling cosmetic line in America.

50% of every Mary Kay® purchase made through our website or marykay.com/J_Abel will be donated to Brittany's Hope to continue advocating on behalf of special waiting children worldwide.

For more information:

- Call the Brittany's Hope Office at (717) 367-9614
- Email shankj@brittanyshope.org
- Visit <http://www.brittanyshope.org/marykay.html>
- Shop now at http://www.marykay.com/J_Abel

Meghan, Our Amazing Blessing

by Dawn Brocious, Volunteer/Recipient Family Coordinator

Over the past three years, Brittany's Hope has been privileged to have Meghan Toledo, a Work Study student from Elizabethtown College, be a vital part of our team. Meghan's dedication to our mission has been a wonderful asset in many areas with a highlight in the creative writing and technical knowledge areas. A heartfelt "Thank You" Meghan for the gift you have been to Brittany's Hope!

Upon her recent College graduation with a major in English Professional Writing and a minor in Sociology and Communications, Meghan has relocated to pursue her dreams. Meghan, we wish you all the best that life has to offer, both professionally and personally. We're sure you will go far in life, with the gifts you have been blessed with. We miss you Meghan and are thankful you are with us "in spirit"!

What a pleasant surprise it was to receive a recent note from Meghan in which she wrote:

*Dawn and Jackie,
You guys made my time at Brittany's Hope amazing. I'm so sorry I couldn't stay, but I know you will continue to help children, make the world a better place and keep the office loud with laughter. I'll miss you! Thank you for your kindness and support.*

*Please keep in touch,
Meghan*



Spotlight on Volunteers:

Scott Chamberlain

Scott, a 2006 graduate of Elizabethtown College, has been a dedicated Brittany's Hope supporter. We planned to write a profile about Scott... but when he sent his own commentary, it was perfect:

I am extraordinarily honored to be highlighted as a Brittany's Hope Volunteer, but I cannot help but think that the spotlight should be reversed to shine on the foundation and its team of leaders; Candace, Dawn, Jackie, and their families who day in and day out strive to create miracles for children around the globe. They have set the level of enthusiasm and dedication within BHF... I have just followed suit.

My involvement with BHF should be attributed to my college professor Dr. Brian Greenberg who first introduced me to the foundation. Following the Elizabethtown College Motto, "Educate for Service" Dr. Greenberg created an experiential learning opportunity that allowed marketing/advertising majors to offer their knowledge, skills, and abilities to outside nonprofit organizations such as BHF. From here my interest in the foundation grew and I pledged to continue my involvement with them.

My most rewarding experience with BHF was at this year's "Walk of Love" when the true meaning of BHF really hit me. BHF is not a foundation that matches children with parents. It is instead a growing community of family that creates families by bringing together two parties with room to love.

I am excited to be a part of this community that grows bigger each day and pledge to continue my support. "When we do the best that we can, we never know what miracle is wrought in our life, or in the life of another." ~Helen Keller.

Scott, it's refreshing to have young adults of your caliber get behind our mission and be so supportive. It has been a privilege to get acquainted with you and your peers who so graciously shared your Marketing expertise to benefit Brittany's Hope. We appreciate the time you invested. Your participation in the "Walk of Love" and all that it entailed was a wonderful asset to a very successful event. Thank You Scott, for inviting your friends to participate and for sending some wonderful Volunteers our way. They are such a blessing to us! We wish you much success in your career and all the best that life has to offer!



Spotlight on Brittany's Hope Board Member Barb Deiner

A Compassionate Teacher

by Dawn Brocius, Volunteer/Recipient Family Coordinator

We are proud to introduce you to Barb Diener, a delightful member of our Board. Barb joined the Board of Directors of Brittany's Hope in July 2003 and has recently accepted the position of Vice Chairperson on our Executive Board. Barb, we appreciate your willingness to step up to the plate.

Barb is best described as dedicated, compassionate, hardworking, dependable... the list could go on! It's always delightful when Barb strolls into the Brittany's Hope office – we are guaranteed to share some good laughs!

From 2003 to present, Barb has consistently been a vital part of the Fundraising Committee. Her creative ideas are always beneficial. Barb gives countless hours in preparation for the Home Tour and Art Auction.

Barb and her husband Ray reside in the Elizabethtown area. They are the parents of three wonderful grown children and proud grandparents to their five sweet grandchildren. Barb and Ray own and operate Elizabethtown Crystal Pure Water and eighteen other branch locations in several counties. Barb is the Vice-President and Secretary and has held these positions in their family owned business since 1990.

Barb's professional career in teaching began when she graduated from Elizabethtown College in 1964 with a B.S. in Elementary Education. With degree in hand, Barb taught second grade students at East High Elementary School in Elizabethtown and third grade students in the Hempfield School District. After a few years of teaching, Barb and Ray began their family and Barb switched gears from her teaching role as a public school teacher to that of "Mom".

As a member of the Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren, Barb stepped into the role of Sunday School teacher for the energetic preschool age group. Barb also served on the Church Board for seven years as well as various committees over the years.

As an active member of the local community, Barb taught at the Community Nursery School in Elizabethtown, located in the Brethren Church. She was privileged to teach the fun-loving three and four year olds for nine years. Barb also served on the Board of the Elizabethtown Child Care Center for four years.

In addition to her years of service to local children, Barb has also been



employed at Mueller's Flower Shop for seven years and the Country Haus Gift Shop for four years. Both businesses are located in Elizabethtown. A volunteer at heart, Barb also filled the important role of escorting Skilled Care patients at Masonic Homes for seven years. No matter what the task at hand, we're sure all the folks who crossed paths with Barb over the years feel blessed to know her. Her fun-loving personality and radiant smile are simply delightful!

In her spare time, Barb enjoys practicing yoga, walking, reading, flowers, sewing and last but not least, her sweet grandchildren!

A heartfelt "Thank You" Barb for your sunny disposition and ever-present dedication to Brittany's Hope and the world's special children. We appreciate you so very much! ::

Seize The Opportunity

by Mary Jean Risser, Board Member

"Taking Steps to Bring Children Home" - This was the goal of 89 year old John D. Schmidt as he walked four laps around the track of Elizabethtown College during the Brittany's Hope Walk of Love. When asked what inspired him to walk, he replied, "What impressed me is the fact that it is an international event. I admire people who travel thousands of miles to adopt."

He remembers back to 1943 when he was talking to a young man in Liberia. The youth was working at the U.S. Air Base to earn enough money to go to college. The school required students to wear shoes. The young man had never had a pair of shoes. John is still saddened as he recalls that he could have bought the shoes, but didn't. Now, Mr. Schmidt urges everyone who meets an opportunity to help someone to seize it.

During his mission work in many countries, he has seen poor and abused children. Thus, "God led me to sponsoring children. My funds provided medicine, clothes, and education for these children." At 89 years of age and still walking to promote a mission dear to his heart, he says, "God has been so good to me. It's uncanny."



Donations given In Honor or Memory Of A Loved One:

Paul & Gloria Rice in memory of Gladys Esh.

Joseph & Rose Block in memory of Thomas Andrew Block, Sr.

Connor's Team in memory of Connor's "Auntie" Darlene Eberly.

Barbara Diener in memory of Doris Garland.

Ruth Melvin in memory of Charles T. Starling.

Mary Bucher in memory & honor of Gladys Esh.

Annette Telenko, in memory of her sister, Mary Louise O'Neill

The Cutest Frog We Have Ever Seen

by Russ and Jen Burden

We always had adoption in the back of our minds but we had never made any definite plans about it, until Jen was looking up information about Achondroplasia on the internet. The Brittany's Hope Web site popped up with information about a little boy from Russia with dwarfism. We were both captivated by his picture and couldn't get him out of our minds and hearts. That was November 2004. Ruslan was one and a half years old at the time.



Russ, Jen and Ruslan Burden with Ruslan's sponsors, Glenn and Andrea Livelsberger.

We made the first scary step of calling Cradle of Hope. They explained the process and were very honest about how emotionally draining it could be. Their frankness about the ups and downs of international adoption made us feel very comfortable because we knew we were getting the kind of information we needed to make a good decision. We prayed, talked to family and friends and decided to bring Ruslan home.

Waiting

We started our paperwork at a hurried pace and got our first packet in soon after Christmas. We waited anxiously for a phone call for our first trip. We received it in March and went over in April 2005. We spent ten glorious days bonding with our beautiful son. We were with him for some major firsts: the first time he remembered riding in a car (he hadn't been in a car since he went from the hospital to the orphanage at five days old), the first time he had been to a market and the first time he ate a Cheerio. After our time was up we had to leave him there. That was one of the most difficult things we have done but we left confident that our second trip would be soon.

We finished our paperwork when we got back to the states and were sure the phone call would come at any moment, but it did not. We wound up having to change our paperwork significantly and there were many personnel changes in the Archangelsk region that slowed down all adoptions. We finally received word that we would be able to go over the Christmas holiday. We were so ecstatic! Then our hopes were crushed when we were told

at the last minute that they were not processing any more adoptions in 2005.

Joy at Last

We were utterly devastated. After a rough Christmas season without Ruslan, we put him in God's hands. Then, very unexpectedly, we were given the go ahead for a late January trip.

When we landed in Archangelsk our coordinator picked us up. She told us that we would be able to see Ruslan that night, but he was in the infirmary with the chicken pox. Then she said that he was green, "...like a little frog". That was slightly confusing, green chicken pox? We just dismissed it as a Russian expression that didn't translate well.

When we got to the orphanage they had us wait in a small room. A nurse rounded the corner with Ruslan. He was LITERALLY GREEN from the neck down. His head and face were covered with dots of bright green. It looked as if someone had dotted each of his chicken pox with a magic marker. Even his hair looked like it had been given a slightly green hue. Seeing the shock on our faces our coordinator quickly explained that in Russia they use a disinfectant that dyes the skin green. We were just relieved that Ruslan's condition was washable.

After some days of running around filing paperwork, it was time to see the judge. Both of us had to give a short speech outlining why we were adopting Ruslan. Standing before the judge was the scariest thing I think either of us has ever done but the thing that brought tears to our eyes was hearing the Russian social worker's speech. She described how Ruslan would not have a future in Russia because of his dwarfism. His likelihood of being adopted would be almost nil because of his medical diagnoses. He would age through the



orphanage system without the love and care of a family and discrimination against people with his disability would make it very difficult for Ruslan.

The judge deliberated for ten minutes and on January 31, 2006 he became our son officially. We were finally bringing Ruslan home!

Life with Ruslan

Ruslan has a huge chunk of our hearts. Everyday he wakes up and flings his little arms around our necks and chirps, "Morning, Morning, Morning!" He loves to run on his tip-toes and Cheerios are still his favorite cereal. It's hard to imagine our lives without him.

We only made it through this whole process because of the grace of God. He showed us time and time again that the journey was just as important as the outcome. We learned lessons that we never would have any other way. We are indebted to the Livelsbergers for their generous donation that made all this possible. We are also indebted to Brittany's Hope, our family, and friends for their constant support, encouragement, and prayers. Thank you to everyone that helped make this happen.

God Bless,

Russ, Jen, and Ruslan Burden ::



Feature

Brittany's Buds

Granted Children Waiting for Families

Koontorn - Thailand

Koontorn is a handsome 8-year-old boy who likes to laugh and tease. He likes to walk and run. He is said to be in physically good health. He had a clubfoot of his right foot, which was corrected by wearing a brace. He also has bilateral nearsightedness for which he wears glasses. Koontorn attends a neighborhood kindergarten, and will begin first grade in the spring of 2006. He is a talkative boy, who is described as social and likes to interact with others. He lives in a boys' home where he is attached to the house father, and gets along well with his peers and caretakers.

Grant: \$5,000

Contact: Abbie Smith

Agency: Holt International Children's Services

Phone: (541) 687-2202 ext. 156



Blaine - NW Asia

Blaine is a handsome little boy who will celebrate his 4th birthday this year. He readily smiles and has an extensive vocabulary that includes "mom", "dad", and "love you!" Blaine is a friendly child who enjoys company. He likes to talk and loves to be hugged. Blaine has cerebral palsy so his muscle tone is somewhat weak. He can stand with support and seems to be a determined child.

Grant: \$6,000

Contact: Abbie Smith

Agency: Holt Int'l Children's Services

Phone: (541) 687-2202 ext. 156



Henry - Haiti

Henry is a six year old boy with a bright smile! He can recite his ABCs and is currently enrolled in school. He recently began studying French. Henry loves to play with other children and gets along well with them and his caregivers. He is a healthy boy who has no reported health issues.

Grant: \$5,000

Contact: Carrie Palmer

Agency: Holt Int'l Children's Services

Phone: 541-687-2202 ext. 187



Sherrie - Vietnam

Sherrie is a friendly five year old little girl who likes to play with dolls. She likes to be outdoors and enjoys playing with her foster grandparents. She gets along very well with the other children in the house. Sherrie likes attention and enjoys cuddling. She is a healthy child who has some vision problems in her right eye that may be possible to correct with surgery. She has perfect vision in her left eye and does not let any of this slow her down.

Grant: \$5,000

Contact: Abbie Smith

Agency: Holt Int'l Children's Services

Phone: (541) 687-2202 ext. 156



Bryan - Colombia

This handsome little one will be turning two years old this summer. Bryan readily smiles and has good sleeping and eating patterns. He can recognize his name when he is called and he has started mumbling. Bryan was born with microcephaly and has no apparent health issues at this time. This little guy will need the love and support of a family to reach his full potential. Are you his family?

Grant: \$7,500

Contact: Janie Van Dyke

Agency: Bethany Christian Services

Phone: 1-800-652-7082



Natasha & Alyona - Russia

These two sisters, 10 and 11 years of age are currently living together in a boarding school. Both children are healthy and have had no major health issues. These two sweet sisters have been waiting for a place to call home for almost 5 years. They are harder to place only because of their age. **Grant: \$8,500**
Contact: Michelle Yang
Agency: Commonwealth Adoptions Int'l
Phone: 520-321-3902



Yamile & Jorge - Latin America

This sister and brother have been waiting for a family for over year. Yamile is 7 years old and her younger brother will soon be turning 2. Yamile was born with a cleft lip and palate. She has had some surgeries to help correct this but will require some additional surgeries. She is currently participating in speech therapy and is reported to be making progress. Jorge is in good health and is reported to be a happy boy. **Grant: \$6,000**
Contact: Hayley Finney *Agency: Commonwealth Adoptions* *Phone: 813-269-4646*

In each child lives the wonder and promise of the future.

Quilt Sewn Especially for Brittany's Hope Art Auction

by Mary Jean Risser

With the idea of a compass as an instrument to find direction, Lillian Campbell of Elizabethtown designed, stitched, and donated a quilt for the upcoming Brittany's Hope Art Auction on November 3, 2006. In lovely shades of blue with a touch of red, the quilt can be used as a wall hanging or table cover.

Lillian first became acquainted with Brittany's Hope when she volunteered as a hostess for the Christmas home tours. She has made quilts for each of her grandchildren, her church projects, and several charities. Her Cathedral Window Pattern bed cover was awarded a blue ribbon at the 2006 Elizabethtown Fair.

Lillian belongs to quilting groups which she says "offers a good fellowship and unique ideas." She especially enjoys historical stories about quilts.

With the donation of her time and talent she hopes the compass design will "be an instrument to guide" a precious child to a forever family.



Lillian Campbell and Dawn Brocius display the quilt Lillian created for the Brittany's Hope Art Auction on November 3rd, 2006 in Middletown, PA.

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Brittany's Buds: Granted Children Waiting for Families



Vladislav - Eastern Europe

Vladislav is an adorable three year old boy who has been waiting for a family since birth. He is a bright boy who enjoys stories and pictures. He speaks short sentences and can identify colors and shapes. He gets along very well with other children in the orphanage as well as the caregivers. This sweet little boy was diagnosed with HIV at birth. He needs the love and attention of family to reach his fullest potential. Are you that family?

Grant: \$5,000

Contact: Michelle Yang

Agency: Commonwealth Adoptions

Phone: 520-321-3902

Want to plan
an event to help
children?

Brittany's Hope has event-planning information packets available for anyone interested in holding a fundraising event. Whether you're interested in our Brittany's Cribs Campaign, The Sunflower Children Project, The Emily Cane Project, or any of our humanitarian efforts, you can make a difference in the lives of deserving children!

For more information, or to request a free packet, visit our web site at www.BrittanysHope.org/planevent.html.



Doug - Vietnam

This 5 year old boy came into care at 6 months old, and joined his foster family when he was almost 4. Doug is very attached to his foster mother, and a foster brother in their home. He enjoys playing computer games and sharing food and toys with his foster brother. He is active, enjoys playing sports and participating in group activities. He attends kindergarten and follows the rules, though his teacher says he doesn't always pay attention. He knows his numbers, some of the alphabet and can draw shapes. He expresses his ideas well in full sentences, replies quickly to questions, and is very curious. He brushes his teeth, makes his bed, and washes his hands before meals.

Grant: \$5,000

Contact: Carrie Palmer

Agency: Holt Int'l Children's Services

Phone: 541-687-2202 ext. 187



Fredy & Yuli - Latin America

Fredy and Yuli are 9 and 8 years old. This brother and sister have been waiting for a home for five years now. Both children are happy, healthy, and anxious to find a loving family. These children would greatly benefit from the stability and love of a family. Yuli is a very sweet and loving girl who possesses great leadership qualities and enjoys helping others. Fredy is a smart child who shares a very close bond with his sister.

Grant: \$6,000

Contact: Hayley Finney

Agency: Commonwealth Adoptions

Phone: 813-269-4646

906-24 - Ethiopia

906-24 is a little girl who will be turning two years old this year. She can sit up when she is supported and she has a healthy appetite. 906-24 has possible vision loss and was born with hydrocephalus. She is also currently on medication for seizures.

Grant: \$5,000

Contact: Lisa Trinh

Agency: Children's Home Society and Family Services

Phone: 800-952-9302 ext. 2252



Thuy An - Vietnam

Thuy An is a little girl who is almost a year old. She is a happy baby who likes to eat and play with her toys. She is healthy overall but was born with a cleft lip and palate. She will need surgery to help correct this condition. She smiles most of the time, showing off her toothless grin.

Grant: \$7,500

Contact: Heather Carter
Agency: Pearl S. Buck International
Phone: 215-249-0100 ext. 136



Cristian and Leidy - Colombia

Leidy and Cristian are a sister and brother who have been waiting for a home since 2001. Leidy is a ten year old girl and Cristian is an eight year old boy. Both of these children are happy, healthy, and get along well with other children. Cristian does have some speech delays and is currently taking medication for hyperactivity. **Grant: \$6,000**

Contact: Hayley Finney **Agency:** Commonwealth Adoptions **Phone:** 813-269-4646



Sasha - Eastern Europe

Sasha is an affectionate and thoughtful 10 year old girl. She is a natural athlete and enjoys skiing and playing all kinds of active games with other kids. She treats her friends and caregivers with kindness and respect. This organized and hard working student is always striving to do better. She finds pleasure in taking care of pets and flowers. This child has tested positive for TB and was born with MMD.

Grant: \$5,000

Contact: Michelle Yang
Agency: Commonwealth Adoptions Int'l
Phone: 520-321-3902



Juan - Colombia

Juan is a handsome six year old little boy. He is currently attending school and doing well. He is a quiet and polite child who follows directions well. Juan has been waiting for a family ever since 2003. He contracted meningitis at 6 months old which caused limited motion in his left side. He was also diagnosed with epilepsy which is currently regulated with medication.

Grant: \$5,000

Contact: Janie Van Dyke
Agency: Bethany Christian Services
Phone: 1-800-652-7082



Liz - Colombia

Liz is a beautiful 11 year old girl who is currently enrolled in a private school and is doing very well. She is an intelligent girl who demonstrates good comprehension and excels in all her school subjects. Among her favorites are social studies and Spanish. She is described as affectionate, honest and not rebellious. Liz is a healthy child that is motivated to be adopted. She very much wants a family.

Grant: \$5,000

Contact: Hayley Wilmes
Agency: Commonwealth Adoptions Intl
Phone: 813-269-4646

Feature (continued from page 9)

Brittany's Buds: Granted Children Waiting for Families



Greene Sisters - Guatemala

This beautiful sibling group of three are sisters who are full of energy and enjoy playing with their peers. The oldest enjoys climbing on the play set coloring, and playing with dolls. She is attending school, has good communication skills, and is in good health. She was born with a clubfoot but has had two surgeries and recovered well. She has a “weak” right hand, so she has some fine motor delays. However, she is said to be very active despite this weakness. The middle sibling is said to be on target for her age in communication, social and motor skills. She loves to receive hugs and kisses from her caregivers. She was described as “tranquil,” but sometimes gets upset at meal time and doesn’t eat well. She also has trouble controlling her bladder and bowels at night or when she has a temper. She is in good health, and her teacher says she has a good capacity to learn. The youngest sister also had clubfoot, and had her first surgery in the spring of 2005. She can walk, bend down to pick up toys, and tries to kick a ball. She can turn pages in a book, and say several words. Her development is reported to be on target for her age. The Greene sisters’ parents are said to have been alcoholics, and may also have used other substances. **Grant: \$10,000**

Contact: Carrie Palmer Agency: Holt Int’l Children’s Services Phone: 541-687-2202 x 187



Joy - Haiti

Joy is a beautiful eight year old little girl who is happy and in good health. She is an excellent helper and gets along well with others. Joy is waiting for a family in part because she is an older child, and because of some challenges with her country’s adoption program. Does sunny Joy’s wide smile make you smile, too?

Grant: \$4,000

Contact: Abbie Smith

Agency: Holt Int’l Children’s Services

Phone: 541-687-2202 ext. 156



Mishel - Guatemala

Sweet Mishel is getting ready to turn one year old. She is an adorable little girl who has big brown eyes and dark hair. She likes to smile and laugh. Mishel is HIV positive. With the poor medical care in Guatemala, it is important that she finds a family so that she may receive proper medical care. This special little girl has been waiting for a family since birth.

Grant: \$7,500

Contact: Cara Helberg

Agency: Across the World Adoptions

Phone: 800-610-5607



Gowtham - India

Gowtham is a lovable boy who will soon celebrate his first birthday. He recognizes familiar caregivers and greets them with a smile. This delightful little boy has Cerebral Palsy and will need the love and support of a family to reach his full potential. He is currently receiving daily therapy to prevent further muscle loss. Gowtham has waited since birth for a family, could you be that family?

Grant: \$4,400

Contact: Mia LaBlonde

Agency: Commonwealth Adoptions Int’l

Phone: 262-796-9898



Baby01 - China

Baby01 is a cute 8 year old outgoing boy who likes to smile. He is currently living with foster parents and attending kindergarten. His teachers describe him as friendly and smart. He knows 20 Chinese characters and can count to 100. He was born with a cleft lip and palate that have been repaired.

Grant: 4,000

Contact: Amanda Young

Agency: La Vida Adoptions International

Phone: (800) 513-1910



Kent - Thailand

Kent will be celebrating his third birthday this summer! This charming little boy likes to draw and laugh. He readily smiles and has developed a close bond with his foster brother. Kent is alert and pays attention though he does not communicate with full words. He is currently receiving speech therapy to improve his speech. Kent has some global delays but is making good progress overall.

Grant: \$5,000

Contact: Abbie Smith

Agency: Holt Int'l Children's Services

Phone: (541) 687-2202 ext. 156



David - Vietnam

David is a handsome toddler who loves spending time with his foster father and helping his foster mother around the house. He is developmentally on target in motor, social and educational skills. He can walk on tiptoes, dress himself, and speak in sentences. He is on medication for "fatty kidney," or "lipid nephrosis." He is on medication for epilepsy, but his EEGs are showing decreasing signs of epilepsy. David waits for a family who is open to some unknowns and can give him the love and medical care he needs.

Grant: \$5,000

Contact: Carrie Palmer

Agency: Holt Int'l Children's Services

Phone: 541-687-2202 ext. 187



Patrick - China

Patrick is a young man that was born in early 2002. His caregivers describe him as smart and active having a "great curiosity". He is not a shy boy and is very clever. Patrick is an independent child that can eat and dress himself. He is also capable of learning things quickly and mastering them. He was born with a cleft lip and palate that was repaired in September 2002, but is otherwise in good health. Patrick has been waiting for a family for three years.

Grant: \$3,000

Contact: Stefani Ellison

Agency: Children's House International

Phone: (435) 867-5255



April - China

April is a little girl who recently celebrated her 8th birthday. She loves to play house and sing to her dolls. April is described as sensitive and nurturing. She gets along well with other children and very much enjoys being with her friends. April has an artificial left eye and some scarring on her legs. She is currently living with foster parents and attending 1st grade. She is doing very well in school and gets very good grades in every subject.

Grant: \$5,000

Contact: Stefani Ellison

Agency: Children's House International

Phone: (435) 867-5255



Kelli - China

Kelli is a cute 6 year old girl who is reported to be deaf, but may have some hearing ability in her right ear. She also has hepatitis B. She is described as a "good little girl" who is "obedient." She enjoys playing with other children, running, and dancing. She waits for an experienced forever family who has the resources and knowledge for a child with possible deafness.

Grant: \$5,000

Contact: Carrie Palmer

Agency: Holt Int'l Children's Services

Phone: 541-687-2202 ext. 187

Feature (continued from page 11)

Brittany's Buds: Granted Children Waiting for Families



Mangai - India

Mangai has been waiting for a family since birth and just recently turned a year old. She is a happy child who likes to be held. Mangai has a limb anomaly that affects her elbow and knee. She is currently receiving daily physical therapy to improve her range of motion and prevent any further complications.

Grant: \$4,400

Contact: Mia LaBlonde

Agency: Commonwealth Adoptions Int'l

Phone: 262-796-9898



Manna - India

Manna is a cute baby girl with big brown eyes and a beautiful smile. She can walk with support, stand on her own for a few minutes, and feed herself biscuits and fruit. She is an active little girl who interacts appropriately with people and surroundings. She has several café au lait spots on her trunk, and a high arched palate. She has adjusted well to her foster family, and likes to be carried. She waits for a loving family who is open to the unknowns of her condition, and who have the medical resources she needs.

Grant: \$5,000

Contact: Carrie Palmer

Agency: Holt Int'l Children's Services

Phone: 541-687-2202 ext. 187



Trushna - India

Trushna is an enthusiastic and curious 3 year old child. She is very eager to meet and greet visitors. Trushna enjoys attention and being hugged. Her macular dystrophy causes her to wear glasses. She has some cognitive and language delays but is otherwise healthy. There is additional medical information, pictures, and a video of this child. Are you Trushna's forever family?

Grant: \$6,500

Contact: Abbie Smith

Agency: Holt Int'l Children's Services

Phone: 541-687-2202 ext. 156

*When I approach a
child, he inspires in
me two sentiments;
tenderness for what he
is, and respect for what
he may become.*

--Louis Pasteur

Brittany's Blossoms: Sunbeams in Our Garden



Sabrina - Thailand

Sabrina is an adorable ray of sunshine who will be two years old this summer. She is a favorite of her caregivers. She loves to greet everyone and responds by cooing and smiling. This wonderful child was born without arms and legs. Sabrina receives occupational and physical therapies for two hours every day. She has been waiting for a family since birth.

Grant: \$5,000

Contact: Abbie Smith

Agency: Holt Int'l Children's Services

Phone: 541-687-2202, ext. 156



Suyog - India

Suyog is a seven year old boy who is eager to go to school. He is described as being shy, happy, kindhearted, and loving. He is very helpful to his caregivers. This sweet boy has some cognitive and speech delays. Suyog was very attached to a friend who was recently adopted. He now often asks about his family as he is eagerly waiting for them.

Grant: \$5,000

Contact: Abbie Smith

Agency: Holt Int'l Children's Services

Phone: 541-687-2202 ext. 156

Spotlight on Volunteers:

Marcie & Mike Bahn

Marcie and Mike Bahn live in Elizabethtown, PA with their two children Shane and Kasie. Marcie is employed by Elizabethtown College as the Associate Director of International Programs. Mike is the Vice President of Tekgard, Inc in York, PA.

The family first became aware of the Brittany's Hope Foundation through friends Zane (former Brittany's Hope board member) and Melissa Gizzi, and Rose (Brittany's Hope board member) and Joe Block. Their interaction with Brittany's Hope continued to grow due to Marcie's involvement with international students at Elizabethtown College. When Marcie started her position in late 2004, the students were already associated with the Abel family and Brittany's Hope fundraising. Amy Bartlett (Elizabethtown College '06) was working with international students and fundraising coordinators to provide guides for the holiday Stone Gables Home Tour events. From there, students began to assist with many of the fundraising efforts.

According to Marcie, "Foreign students study in the United States to benefit themselves, their families, and their countries. Their allegiance to their home community is strong, but they are not able to directly contribute to their home community. Through Brittany's Hope they are able to bring some hope to children of their own country, or neighboring countries, who have no hope of achieving the dream they themselves are living. The students participate in fundraising events, and assist families of adopted children to help them understand the child's culture and language. The students are truly excited and humbled to be a part of the Brittany's Hope cause. Their energy and enthusiasm is enlightening and contagious."

As the Bahns witnessed the excitement of the students, the Brittany's Hope families, and the Brittany's Hope volunteers, they realized they wanted to help these special children be united with their forever families. Mike states, "Watching the Brittany's Hope children play and have a 'grand-ol'-time' gives me a greater reward than the labor and time investment. The appreciation and gratitude expressed by the children and adopting families makes it easy to teach our children our family values. Every child deserves a chance to be happy."

Being a member of the Elizabethtown College campus, whose motto is "Educate for Service," Marcie saw a unique opportunity at the 2005 1st Annual Walk of Love to introduce Brittany's Hope to the campus community. The connection was a success as professors, administrators, and students worked together to help raise money and provide services for the 2nd Annual Walk of Love at the Elizabethtown College track in 2006. The Bahns look forward to contributing to the growth of Brittany's Hope on a personal and professional level for years to come, and we appreciate everything they do. ::



Annual Live Art Auction Will Feature Fine Art, Sports and Music Memorabilia, and much more!

On Friday, November 3, 2006, the Brittany's Hope Foundation is hosting a live art auction at the Spring Garden Conference Center at 901 Spring Garden Drive in Middletown, PA.

Along with framed art, guests will also be able to bid on goodie baskets and other items in a silent auction. The baskets contain valuable items such as day spa packages and a dinner-and-a-movie at the Abel's home.

Guests are invited to enjoy hors d'oeuvres, wine, and cheese. Coffee, cake and pastries will also be offered. The delicious food and beverages have been generously provided by Commonwealth Catering. (www.commonwealthcatering.com).

The art can be previewed at 7:00 p.m. The auction begins at 8:00 p.m. The artists and memorabilia featured include Adams, Animation Art by Disney, Chagall, Dali, Kinkade, Max, Miro, Moses, Park, Picasso, Rembrandt, Renoir, Rockwell, Toulouse-Lautrec, Warhol, Wyeth, and many more. All of the works are custom framed with fine craftsmanship.

A special auction of artwork created by adopted children brought home with the help of Brittany's Hope will be hosted by Lori Burkholder of WGAL TV 8. Lori acted as a guest auctioneer at last year's art auction, and her humor and grace charmed everyone.

Admission is \$15 per person, \$25 per couple. For tickets and information, please contact the Brittany's Hope office at (717) 367-9614. All proceeds to benefit the Brittany's Hope Foundation.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Spotlight on Board Members Glenn and Deb Ellis

“Our Favorite Cause”

by Candace Abel

For many of our readers, their first introduction to Brittany’s Hope was through our web site. We are proud of our web site and the beautiful way it evokes our work at Brittany’s Hope. An educational and eloquent web site is not just “born” however; it requires creativity, enthusiasm and countless hours of skilled work. We are lucky to have our own “web angel” at work in the background, updating, improving and creating this essential link to the public. This spirited, red-headed imaginative genius is board member Deborah Ellis!

She joined our team of volunteers when we needed help designing a web site. She offered to contribute her time and talent, and as she puts it, “immediately fell in love with Brittany’s Hope.” Six years have passed since then, and Deb’s time here has mushroomed from managing the web site quarterly to weekly updates as our foundation has grown dramatically over the years.

Besides Deb’s commitment to the web site, she is responsible for originating our newsletter. Deb is also responsible for a great deal of the levity around the office; her wonderful sense of humor and vivacious personality always enlivens our days. Deb’s enthusiasm for the work has spilled over into her home; to quote Deb, “I joined the Board, then talked about BH and enjoyed the meetings so much that Glenn wanted to volunteer, too.” We are thrilled that Deb brought her husband, Glenn on as a new board member.

At Brittany’s Hope, Glenn fits in his expertise in any way needed. As Deb says, Glenn is a “mechanical superhero” and can fix anything that’s broken. He is always available at fundraising events for tasks that require a strong back and helping hand. In addition to this, he created the mentor and commitment hours program for our recipient families. Currently he is excitedly researching his latest brainstorm idea: a college and trade school Scholarship Fund for our adopted Brittany’s kids!

Glenn and Deb were in the same class at Elizabethtown High School, and graduated in ‘82, but their love story did not begin until 1998 after years spent away from Elizabethtown. During a Christmas visit to her family, Glenn’s son Cordell invited Deb over to see his new train set. Cordell says he “set them up on purpose.” Glenn and Deb married on December 26, 1999, the first anniversary



Glenn, Joshua and Deb Ellis

of their first date. Today Cordell is 12, and is in 7th grade. And happily, Glenn and Deb have given Cordell a younger, sweet brother named Joshua. Joshua is a frequent and happy visitor to Brittany’s Hope.

Deb is the creative director and co-owner of Live Elements, Inc., based in Winchester, VA where she does graphic design, writes code for web sites, and manages a team of designers. Glenn is a union Journeyman Electrician specializing in commercial and industrial/nuclear electrical work. Glenn feels so enthusiastic about Brittany’s Hope that he convinced his union to contribute a donation for our Walk of Love Event.

Deb and Glenn enjoy reading and solving the New York Times crossword puzzles together. As a family, the Ellis family loves to garden. Deb writes, “in our family food equals love, so we like to cook... a lot.” The Ellis family does other fun family-focused things such as improving the boys’ go-karts, golfing in the backyard, and enjoying their pets (two dogs and two cats, all rescues). The Ellis family dream is to own a small farm overrun with kids, dogs, cats, goats, pigs, and alpacas. In fact, Deb says she would love to raise alpacas and donate the proceeds of their fleece to Brittany’s Hope.

Deb eloquently writes, “We love the Brittany’s Hope Foundation, and are thrilled every time a child comes home. Brittany’s Hope is a favorite cause at our house... we serve on the Board, the boys look forward to each Walk of Love, and Joshua wants to contribute his savings to the Cam Ranh orphanage.” We are so very fortunate that such a warm and wonderful family has adopted the mission of Brittany’s Hope to be their family cause. Thank you Glenn, Deb, Cordell and Joshua; we love you, too! ::

Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn’t do than by the ones you did.

So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.

--- Mark Twain

The Perennial Path newsletter is published by the Brittany’s Hope Foundation, 1160 North Market Street, Elizabethtown, PA 17022, (717) 367-9614. <http://www.brittanyshope.org>

Contributors: Candace Abel, Jackie Abel, Rose Block, Dawn Brocious, Scot Chamberlain, Mary Jean Risser, Russ and Jen Burden, Marcie and Mike Bahn, Ted Pritchard, Lawana McGuffey

Designed by Deborah Ellis

Seeing Opportunity in Every Difficulty

by Ted Pritchard

“A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.” This quote by Sir Winston Churchill accurately depicts the attitude my wife Janiece and I have kept during the adoption process of two ‘special needs’ children.

Our first adoption, completed in June 2003, was our daughter Julia from Ulan Ude, Russia. Her adoption was not an easy one and at times stretched our emotions and faith to extremes. After completing her adoption, we spent the next year dealing with doctor’s appointments and corrective surgeries.

During this time, the Pritchard household slowly moved back to normality. Janiece and I were working opposite shifts so we each had valuable bonding time with Julia. Things seemed to be going pretty good at the time and I made the mistake of thinking, “Hey I’ve got this parenting thing down.” For those of you who know me, every time my ego gets a little out of touch there always seems to be a higher power more than willing to provide a reality check. I say this because shortly after I made that statement, or 1 year, 3 months, 3 days, and 23 hours after we arrived home with Julia, my wife announced that she wanted to adopt another cleft-affected child. Instead of just accepting defeat at that time, I convinced myself that it would take months or even years to get through the adoption process again. In hindsight, I should have known better. Two days later, Janiece informed me that she had contacted MAPS about adopting cleft-affected children. In addition, she told me that MAPS worked with an organization called Brittany’s Hope that provides generous grants to help adoptive families overcome some of the financial hurdles of adopting a ‘special needs’ child. Well I can’t say for sure, but my wife must have heard a faint hissing sound at that point as my ego was rapidly deflated.

Janiece and I learned that Brittany’s Hope had placed a grant through MAPS on a 17 month old cleft-affected male infant in Karaganda, Kazakhstan. Without the grant, Janiece and I wouldn’t have been financially ready to complete an adoption at that time. However, we both agreed that we had the knowledge and experience to provide this child with his forever family.

After the completion of our home study, we received a travel date of April 17, 2005. Janiece and I agreed the Julia would accompany us on the trip as we wanted her to be a part of the adoption bonding process.



After arriving in Karaganda via 3 flights over a 28 hour period, we were ready to meet our child. We were driven to the Nezabudka orphanage to meet our son Rauan for the first time. When we finally met Rauan, to say he was a bit chubby was an understatement. The caregivers informed us that he had a tendency to use his wit and charm to win bigger helpings of food at meal times. As a consequence, he wasn’t real motivated to walk and he had ‘baby cancles.’ So after we arrived he spent the better part of the next four weeks walking laps around the orphanage. The doctors and caregivers found it hard to contain their smiles when they would let us know that they had never seen him sleep so well at night. During this time he and Julia developed a special bond, although several times she went out of her way to let him know who was boss.

After completing our two week visitation period and two week waiting period, we went to court on May 11, 2005 to finalize our adoption. We returned to the U.S. on May 13th with the plan that my wife and her mother would travel to Almaty on June 3rd for a week to complete the adoption through the U.S. embassy. I figured that by staying home and taking care of Julia, I was getting the better end of the deal. After that week I developed a great respect for single parents and met my wife at the airport with bells on and flowers in hand!

Rauan had his cleft lip repaired in July 2005 and has thrived ever since. We

were able to keep his weight stable while he grew almost 9 inches over the next 10 months. When he first came home he was terrified of our animals, but he now spends his time trying to figure out how to ride our elkounds in the backyard, much to their dismay. He also loves playing with his sister Julia. They have taken ice skating and swimming lessons together and recently played on the same soccer team which their daddy coached. Although Rauan will brag about how good he is at soccer, I’m still searching the rule book for the point total awarded for spending half a game sitting in the middle of the field picking dandelions. He also traveled to ‘Pennsylvania house’ to participate in the 2nd annual Brittany’s Hope Walk of Love. We are proud to announce that he was able to ‘wobble wobble’ for four laps and then daddy spent the rest of the time groaning as Rauan rode on his shoulders.

If you ask a biological parent, they will tell you the each childbirth is unique. The same is true for the adoption process. While Julia’s adoption was mentally and physically draining, the adoption of our son Rauan was relatively easy. Janiece and I feel truly blessed for Julia and Rauan and are grateful to everyone who helped along the way. Without the help and generosity of Brittany’s Hope, we may not have been able to complete our adoption of Rauan. ::



Ted, Janiece, Julia and Rauan Pritchard travelled from Wisconsin to attend this year’s Walk of Love!

Second Annual “Walk of Love”

by Rose Block, Board Member and Walk of Love Event Planner

Sunday, May 7, 2006 was an amazing day for Brittany’s Hope. Our second annual Walk of Love took place on a beautiful, warm Sunday afternoon at the Elizabethtown College Track. The event met every expectation. It was an afternoon full of great fellowship and fun. The Robinson Family from New Hampshire brought a whole array of children’s activities, complete with a moon bounce, inflatable obstacle course and carnival games. Face painting and balloons were the icing on the cake for the children!

Two hundred and seventy two people turned out to walk and raise money to bring future children home. Seventeen of our Brittany’s Hope children who are already home showed up with their families, some traveling thirteen hours or more to get to the event in Elizabethtown, PA.

The children wore bright lime-green shirts sporting the fact they were “proud to be a Britt’s Kid”. Their brothers and sisters were given bright yellow shirts that said, “Proud to be a sibling of a Britt’s Kid”. The world was represented that day as each family was introduced; a flag from the country the child was from was carried onto the track to honor their heritage. Brittany’s Hope has worked with fourteen countries to date.

Our poster child this year was Ruslan Burden from Hershey. His great little smile and outgoing personality warmed

the hearts of all as he started the walk with, “1,2,3 -- GO!” As the walkers approached the start/finish line for each lap, they were met by a board member or friendly greeter to receive a mark on an index card they carried with them. This served a dual purpose as it was a great way to keep track of the number of laps made around the track in one hour and also a great way to interact and encourage walkers as they came around the track.

It was very rewarding to see such a turnout. There was a great mix of people that included male and female, young and old, and children from all around the world. All in all, there was a combined 1,745 laps taken that sunny Sunday afternoon. Those 1,782 laps equates to 440 miles of love. Amazing!

In order to participate in the walk each person was asked to complete a flyer with the names and addresses of potential sponsors along with a short personal note asking for a donation. After filling out the flyers and returning them to the office to mail, the participant only needed to show up and walk on the day of the event. It was a very easy way to be a part of our Walk of Love.

Bra Mars Italian Ice donated a wonderful selection of Italian ice for after the walk. It was a hot day and the treat tasted really good following the event. Turkey Hill has been another one of our faithful supporters as they donated over 300 bottles of ice tea and lemonade.



Lila Becker throws a giant basketball in the games area before the event.

ThermalAid bears donated by the Thermal-Aid Company were given to all the children as they left the track.

Our goal for the day was that everyone attending the event would leave that day feeling appreciated and blessed. I think that goal was met. The smiles on the faces of the children were worth the effort put forth to plan the event.

Our financial goal was set high this year in hopes of going above what we raised last year. \$40,000 is a lot of money to raise, considering that the average donation is around \$25.00. I am so pleased and excited to announce that we reached our goal! The 2006 Walk of Love raised \$40,125!!

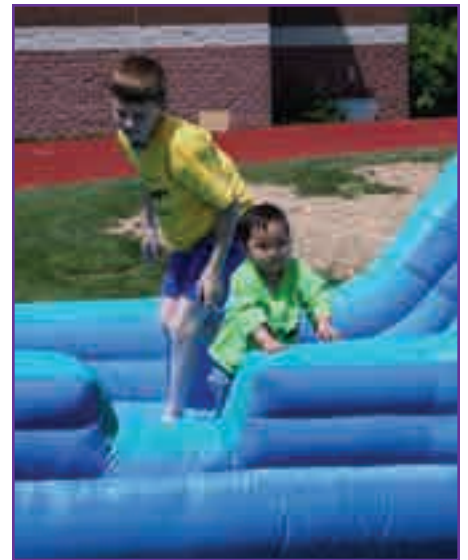
We are very grateful to all the people who participated in the walk either by aiding in the organization of the event, donating items for the day, walking themselves or sponsoring someone who walked. I believe all who participated will agree it was a blessing to be part of this event and hopefully will return next year to participate in the 2007 Walk of Love. You as supporters of Brittany’s Hope, play an important roll in aiding in the adoption of special children all over the world. We could not do what we do without your help. You are changing lives. Our mission at Brittany’s Hope is to save children, one child at a time. With the money raised through the Walk of Love we will be able to grant at least 5 children in hopes of helping them to find forever families to call their own. ::



Families joined the Flag Parade; every country Brittany’s Hope children were born in was represented to honor the childrens’ heritage.



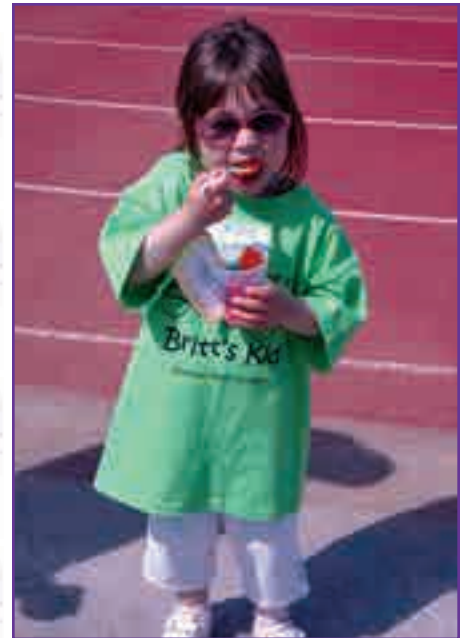
Board member Glenn Ellis worked a registration table with the help of son Cordell, left.



Hannah Kline and her brother had fun on the giant slide.



The 2006 Walk of Love Poster Child, Ruslan Burden, started the Flag Parade.



Anastasia Hanlen enjoyed the water ice!



Two hundred and seventy two people walked.



Hope Abel hitched a ride on brother Nate.

The Greatest Blessing

by Lawana McGuffey

Our adoption story, as every one I have ever read, is an amazing journey. The miracle by which Grace-Marie (Maria) came to be a McGuffey, began in February 2005 as the beginnings of a dream in our hearts. The first stirrings of a desire to adopt again as precious and powerful as the first flutterings of our birth children in the womb, tiptoed into our hearts. This was not the first time we'd heard its whisperings. We knew there was much to pray about and a labor of love ahead of us. Who were we to bring home... and how?



The McGuffey Family

We will never have our dossier go before a birth mother or social worker or orphanage director to compete with other families. When we are considering adopting a child, we start with a sense that the Lord is asking us to be open to another child. At this time we wrestle with our faith and settle the "But how will we feed another child?" question. Then we usually do a round or two with the "But Lord, we are getting old and wearing out" argument. We have always known that we are only to adopt children who have no other hope for a family. Those who are continually passed over are the ones we look for.

If someone else wants the child, they are not meant for us. Usually there is some huge obstacle, either the special needs of the child or children or the price of the adoption, or both. At every obstacle we say, "Lord, if you believe we can. We can!" As we move forward, God supplies.

"Little Grandma"

It was at this point that we discovered a web site called Until All Have Homes. We found 3 little girls on this site who really needed someone. All of these precious ones had a grant from Brittany's Hope! As we contacted referring agencies, one after another of these angels were referred into families... but not into ours! As we waited and prayed we got the call from Commonwealth Adoptions International, that one of the first babies we had inquired about was still available. It was Maria. We called her "Little Grandma". She was so serious and droll in her 4 month photo. We excitedly committed to her.

Then began the long labor of bringing this dear one home. Thanks to Brittany's hope and CAI's assistance, the actual cost of the adoption was covered. We were ecstatic, but that left many other expenses, not to mention the costs of rearing this child with serious medical needs. We believed that God wanted this and that what He wants he is well able to pay for, but some of the people involved - agency personnel, friends and loved ones feared once again that we'd bitten off more than we could chew. Once again good people were poised on the margins of our lives ready to give so that Grace-Marie could come home to us.

A Family, A Name, A Place to Belong Forever

Sometimes dear people ask us questions about the logistics of having more than a couple of children on a single income or parenting more and younger children with our age and the health problems we sometimes have. They ask about college and how the first children feel about cutting an already thin pie into more pieces. They ask what kinds of opportunities we can offer our children and why take another one if we are struggling financially. We can't offer our children a college education right now, or a car, or maybe even the newest or coolest toy, but compared to what some of them would have had in their first situations, they are rich beyond imagination. They are fed (often miraculously and sometimes by other people's generosity), they are clothed (the same way). They are fiercely loved and defended. They have the blessing of good medical care. They are taught God's word as best we understand it. And they have a family, a name, a place to belong forever.



Grace-Marie McGuffey

About how the other children feel ... I am so blessed by their willingness to give some of what they have to someone who has nothing. They have always amazed me that way. That is probably the greatest blessing of this entire journey God has put us on. Seeing the eyes of the five children still at home light up as if it were Christmas when they talked of the new soul to join us was amazing. To see the love with which they reached for her was humbling and wonderful. It turned out to be a long wait for them but they never gave up hope that our baby would come home in God's perfect time.

Pushing Forward Amid Challenges

Grace-Marie's adoption was a lengthy one with many unforeseen complications and difficulties. Nearly a year passed before we held our little one in our arms. Our experience in Colombia was a wonderful one but not without its share of challenges. Every day we pushed forward, fueled by our love for this baby.

Thanks to the help of Brittany's Hope, CAI and many loving and helpful people in Colombia (plus some divine intervention) Grace-Marie came home to be wrapped in the rowdy love of her own big family.

After living with Grace-Marie for six months, we can't remember what it was like without her. She is loud, friendly, engaging and beautiful. We can picture her future filled with love and cheered on by her very own fan club. At this time, we are at the point of finding out exactly why her legs are paralyzed. It seems that her original medical diagnoses were not complete. There is more to learn about this little cuddle bug. But... whether she runs forward into her life or races into it in a purple wheelchair with streamers, we see a bright future for Grace-Marie and because of the help from Brittany's Hope, that future is starting here, with us! ::

Feature: *Brittany's Blooms: We're Home!*



Cuddly Ernestas (Lithuania) and his Daddy.

Antonio (Guatemala): Read Antonio's story on page 1



Min Min (China) celebrated her first 4th of July



Owen (right, China) and his family.



Smiling Miguel (Colombia) is a source of joy for his mom!



Joyful Shae (Kazakhstan) is happy to be home with her mom!



Read Grace-Marie's story on page 18.

Sweet Hannah (China) is a blessing to her family.



Charming Ruslan's story appears on page 5.



Loving Andie (China) is delighted to be home.





Brittany's Hope Foundation
1160 North Market Street
Elizabethtown, PA 17022
717.367.9614
www.BrittanysHope.org



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

Visit us on the web at <http://www.BrittanysHope.org>

Brittany's Hope Foundation

LIVE ART AUCTION

Friday, November 3, 2006

Preview: 7 pm to 8 pm

Auction: 8 pm

Spring Garden Conference Center
901 Spring Garden Drive
Middletown, PA 17057

\$15 per person / \$25 per couple
advance ticket purchases preferred



Hors d'oeuvres — Wine and Cheese — Coffee and Cake — Door Prizes

All proceeds to benefit Brittany's Hope Foundation. For further information, please check our web site at www.BrittanysHope.org