



THE NEW ADDITION

News from Catholic Social Services of Montana

Christmas 2008

Dear Friends,

How do the years fly by so quickly? This year, 2008, has certainly been both one of exhilaration and of deep anxiety and sorrow, depending on your circumstances. For all of you, we pray that the face of the Christ child will shine on you amidst the chaos and uncertainty. Some of you are waiting for your child as you read these words. Trust that God has not forgotten you and neither have we. We pray that you will find your name in next years letter. As we rejoice in our Lords birth, we dedicate the coming year to children all over the world, the born and the unborn.

We are once again humbled and excited to bring you the Children of 2008, 42 children who have changed forever the lives of 37 families. We are daily reminded that we are only instruments of Gods hands in these placements. He who created the heavens and the earth also lovingly placed each child in the family of His choosing. And here they are . . .

ELIZABETH is a happy, smiling, and easygoing little girl. Her mother Catherine reports that one of her favorite activities is wrestling and roughhousing with big brother Josh and cousin Nikolai.



Jill and Lorin had a long wait before sweet little **MASON** was placed with their family. He was welcomed with excitement and joy by his big brother Clayton and sisters Shyan and Dakota. Jill and Lorin feel that their family is now complete and continue to express their gratitude and joy to his courageous birthmother.

Linda wins the prize as the social worker with the placement of two sets of twins in a year. **DYLAN ALEXANDRIA** and **KACIE HALEN** brought Chris and Candace into the lives of Greg and Jacoba, but a love of football and a real friendship keep this relationship thriving.



John and Pam moved from Virginia to Montana, and then were off to Russia to have their beautiful sons **LUKE** (12 months) and **JACK** (14 months) join their family. These parents truly know the meaning of joy and running double time now! We welcome them all to Big Sky country!



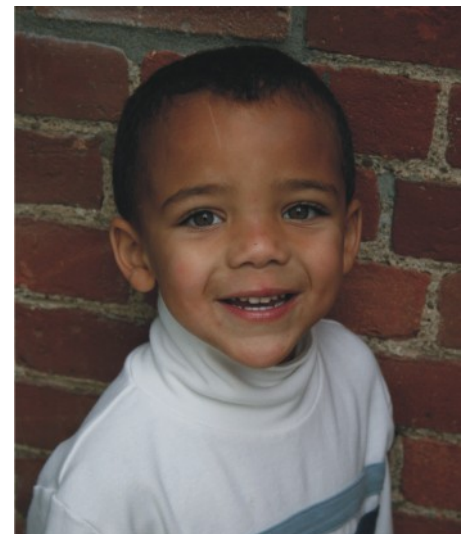
Shelley waited many, many years for the child who was meant for her. She has no doubt that **JACOB DONNE** was worth

the wait. She loves being his Mommy and he is very happy with the arrangement as well.



Stacy and Julia had such a meaningful journey to Ethiopia to meet daughter **KYAH** last December. Two unique situations occurred with numbers while there. First, Ethiopia uses a different calendar so it was only the year 2000 there. Even more mind-boggling, Kyah was reported to be six but actually just turned thirteen! Siblings Mason, Kaymi, Caden, Chloe, and Chase all love her and are teaching their new teen sister all kinds of things.

Pam met **JACK** in 2005 and was blessed to be able to adopt him in 2007 after a long journey. She feels so blessed to have him as her son, and no doubt the



two will hike and backpack all over this glorious state!

Sarah and Dana, along with sisters Emma and Zhou Zhou, welcomed with open arms **ANNE JUNG**, born in Vietnam. This little wonder girl had significant special needs, but with lots of love, devotion, and excellent medical care, she is one happy girl! She is rockin' and



rollin' in her walker, drumming on anything available, and signing up a storm! One of her favorite things to do is to sing loud and proud while at church ~ and her sweet voice is music to everyone's ears!

Two social workers were blessed to be a part of the placement of **NATHANIEL BRYCE** because birthmother Kele moved from Helena to Billings while she was planning the adoption. Parents Michael and Jo could not have been more flexible or loving. The hospital stay felt a bit like a slumber party as the families fully shared their love of this sweet baby.

After a long, difficult journey, the dream of becoming a mother finally came true when Rachel was able to adopt darling **HANNAH**, born in Guatemala. There is nothing more fun and endearing than watching Rachel read "The Barnyard Dance" to her daughter who dances, claps her hands, and giggles! Motherhood definitely suits her well and she loves re-discovering the world with Hannah.

Imagine the shock and delight of getting "the call" that your baby has been born and you need to zip across Montana to meet her now! That was the story for Kevin and Angela – and they were on cloud nine when they met beautiful

SAMUEL. They are so dear to his marvelous birthmother and we pray for her continued healing. Sammy is sheer and utter joy to his proud parents!

Lynn so wanted to parent another child, and finally that desire came true! Joyfully, four-year-old **MARIE**, born in Guatemala, joined their family. Along with brother Andre, this family loves exploring the seasons and outdoors of Montana together!

Parents Dan and Marilee and their daughter Danielle have not only welcomed lovely **KASSANDRA TERESE** into their lives, but birthmother Ruthie and her son Adrian as well. The entrustment ceremony was a gathering of many friends and relatives of both birth and adoptive families. Marc and Abby moved east to Montana, but not before they really ventured east to China, to bring daughter nine-month-old **MALEA** to their family! Sisters Kiersten and Madison were blessed to be able to travel to China, as well. The parents love to see their three daughters laughing together and feel the completion of the Lord's plan now.

It was their cat that brought dear **ARIANNA ELIZABETH** to the home and hearts of Lynn and Clint. The birthparents chose them because of the cat, but they were all excited to further learn they share an interest in Japanese comics!

JOSEPH (from Russia) was warmly welcomed by Lisa, Marty, Maggie, Payton, and Vivian in the Montana springtime. We can only imagine the wonderful celebration at Christmas, as he is surrounded by love and family.

Surprise gifts are always very special. A surprise phone call to Carol and John, announcing the arrival of **TERRA EMMA JANE**, was no exception. John

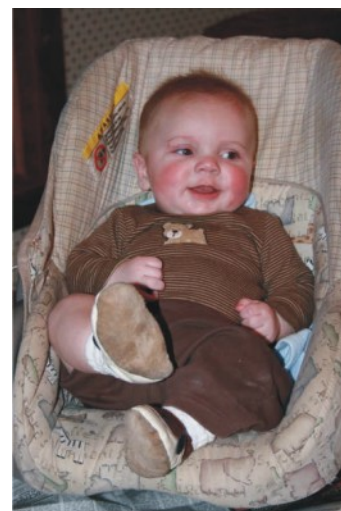


has taken a year off teaching to stay home with Terra, while Carol enjoyed every moment of the summer with her. They both light up as if each day brings a new gift and surprise to them in parenting Terra Emma Jane.

Arlyn and Susan were blessed with their 18th child when darling baby **ISAAC** joined their family in July! Several family members flew to Florida to meet his birth mother and bring him home to Montana. The entire family feels blessed to have this precious gift as part of their family.

Willy and Harlene were one of many families on the "slow boat to China." But it was all worth it when they were finally able to have **ALEXANDER** join their family! He was 21 months at placement and loves his Mom and Dad. Alex is all boy: he loves tractors, cars, going to the hardware store, and manning the tv remote control!

Dave, Kelly, and little Lauren traveled all the way to Idaho to get Lauren's new little brother, **BRAXTON DAVID**. He is a beautiful little boy full of smiles for his big sister and his parents.



Rick and Linsey were placed with the tiniest baby, **ABDISA**, born in Ethiopia. Now, this beautiful little guy is using a spoon, jumping in his exersaucer (with a medical dictionary under his feet so he can reach!) and is happy as can be. Disa adores his big sisters Taylor and Kailey. The family just moved into their new house and what a Christmas they will have as a family!

The gifts of patience, perseverance, and prayer surrounded **JORDAN ALEXANDRA** even before she was born. Birthmother Darcy knew that she wanted a forever home for her baby girl. She fell in love with Kris and Missy and knew in her heart it would all turn out. The Kalispel Tribe granted consent for the adoption and learned from **CSSM** the blessings of open adoption. As Kris said at the adoption celebration: "She is truly a gift worth waiting for." Baby **MIRIAM** came to Jason and Mandy quite unexpectedly. They were called one afternoon and she was in their arms that night. She is a beautiful little girl and they can't imagine their lives without her.

Todd and Jennifer had been praying a long time for God to direct just the right children to them. They have no doubt He got it right. **CHRISTOPHER** and **KATIE** from Uganda seem to have transitioned to the home in a miraculous way. It helped to have siblings Jaden, Kellen, and Sage ready and waiting to welcome them.

Aaron and Kim were utterly stunned after being approved in July and having four-month-old **SIENNA ELIZABETH** placed adoptively with them in early August. Big brother Jack made the entrustment ceremony even more special, with his vow to teach her all kinds of things and share secrets with her! This family honors the place of her birthfamily in their hearts and home.



Barron and Wendy were thrilled although a bit surprised when they found out that they would be able to add their son

Graysen's half-brother to their family. **WYATT COLTON** was born in August and life has never been better or busier.

Dolan and Tracy knew the wait would be worth it when the baby meant for them would arrive, but never in their wildest dreams could they have imagined **DRAKE!** They are head-over-heels in love with their son and have to bargain on who gets to hold him next. Drake has brought more joy to his parents than he may ever know, as they treasure him and his lovely birthmother.

Loren and Stephanie have a big house and they wanted to fill it with the presence of children. It now echoes with laughter and play as **KEVIN, JOANNA,** and **NATALIA** from Colombia not only fill up their home, but their hearts.

Laura was attached to **SAMUEL** from the first time she saw his picture. One of her greatest joys now is watching Samuel and big brother Josh playing, talking, and forming the bond of brothers.

Parents Paul and Jody and son Owen had a lot of ups and downs with the wait to bring **SARA** home from Colombia. Her arrival in the spring was special, and her presence for Christmas will be even more special.



Unconditional love for birthmother Athena created a family for **SHAYLA RAYLYNN** with Jennifer and Jason. Never once did they give up loving Shayla and Athena though it took three years to finalize this adoption. They celebrate in grand style this year, knowing they are now a forever family. The gift of courage certainly led a



beautiful young birth mother to gift her beloved son **CALEB RILEY** to Julie and Cory, his paternal aunt and uncle. Birth grandmother Debbie loves this little guy with her whole heart and honors the decision for such a wonderful family.

Dale and Stephanie barely had time to gas up the car after they received news that **RYLEE** had been born and the birthmother had picked them. Little Rylee decided she would like to tour the hospitals in Billings, Deer Lodge, and Missoula before realizing the best place on earth is home. We give thanks for her good health.

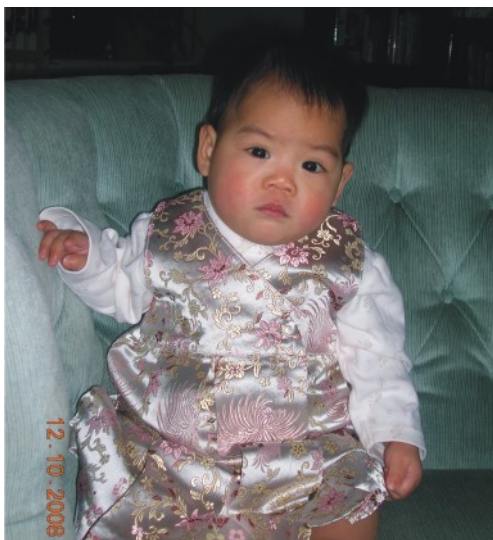
Eric and Amy met their soon-to-be birth family in October, and three weeks later were in the waiting room anxiously awaiting sweet **MICAH's** birth. Big sisters Ava and Flora dote on their new baby brother. This family embraces their birthfamily and has a genuine heart for open adoption. The birthfamily is delighted with the videos they send via the internet. Technology is so amazing it makes open adoption even easier across the miles!



Scott and Kathy moved from Oregon to Montana in the middle of their adoption of **ELLIANA** from Guatemala.

Fortunately, they were all settled in before Elliana arrived. Siblings Abe, Allie, and Libby made the house a home, in preparation for her arrival. Christopher and Kim's faith buoyed them throughout the process of adopting **MICHAEL** from China. They were home in time for Thanksgiving and he will be celebrating his first Christmas with big sister Lily.

After seeing the world through the Peace Corps, Becky knew international adoption was for her. She ventured east to China, to finally be able to bring **JASMINE** home to Montana! Because Jasmine loves people's faces so much, that long airline trip home wasn't even that hard!



We pray for Crystal and Clark as they venture to Ethiopia to meet their daughter, as this newsletter is being printed! We can't wait to hear about her! So, now you have met them. Aren't they amazing? We feel blessed to work for Catholic Social Services with extraordinary adoptive parents, courageous birthparents, and the best children on earth. Our profound appreciation goes to adoptive parents who generously reach out to birthparents. They make their lives more complicated by welcoming birthfamilies into their lives; these acts will bring healing not only to birthparents, but eventually to their child. Please pray for those families whose children are struggling with medical, psychological, or emotional issues. Some children come to families and they are already wounded by war,

neglect, exposure to substance abuse, and the effects of poverty. We speak to those parents: be assured that you are instruments of healing to your child, even if it doesn't always feel that way. Please always remember that we are here to listen.

We pray, too, for birthfamilies - both here and abroad. What sacrificial love it is to release your child so that he or she might have more opportunities. We pray for peace, purpose, and joy in your lives in the coming year. For those of you who made parenting plans, we support your resolve and we rejoice in your decision to bring forth new life.

Special thanks to foster families who embrace babies with unconditional love until life-long plans are made. Your service is deeply appreciated.

Our CSSM family sustained another tragic loss of a young life this year as Drew Murray died from a short term illness. His parents, Becky and George, are treasured adoptive parents and have been wonderful adoption advocates. Missoula was saddened to lose Dr. Lynn Montgomery in the fall. His work with birth families and adoptive families was very special over the years.

To the Board of Directors, guided by the able hands of Bishop George Thomas and Bishop Michael Warfel, we send greetings and blessings. May God grant you ever-deepening communion with Him in 2009.

We have completed a year with our Wendy's Wonderful Kids Program and during this year Leslie has been blessed with serving 10 wonderful children who wait for a "forever family" while they reside in foster care. They have taught us a great deal about handling adversity in their short lives. We ask for your continued prayers for these children that we will find their permanent home during this next year. For a special family holiday tradition join us for the 10th annual A Home for the Holidays, an adoption special airing Tuesday, December 23, 2008 on CBS in the evening. It is a wonderful program highlighting the waiting children in the

foster care system in the United States and the joys of adoption.

There were three marvelous Adoption Celebrations in November (Helena, Billings, and Great Falls) to honor children and parents who unite to form spectacular families. We are still smiling with memories.

Our staff has remained unchanged this year with one major exception. Suzanne Johnson, our Administrative Assistant (and yes, our brains) has taken a full-time position with the Montana Catholic Conference. We will miss her competence, her knowledge, and her brilliant smile. (Fortunately, we can just walk down the hall to see her smile.) Thanks for all your dedicated work, Suzanne. You will be greatly missed. Our bulletin boards are the happiest spots in our offices. To all of you who have shared photos, cards, and letters, we want you to know that hearing from you every year is a powerful battery to keep us energized. Keep them coming! We are deeply indebted to those of you who offer your prayers, your worldly goods, and your money to support our ministry. We simply could not do it without you. Thank you doesn't even begin to touch it.

We pray this finds you filled with joy as you see the light of the manger. Again this year, we ask a favor. Please take this letter, hold it over your heads, and give each other a big hug. That hug is from us. God bless you.