



ABC Newsletter

Spring 2010

A Letter from Ramone...

As always, we have been very busy at Adoption By Choice working with birth parents and adoptive parents building adoption plans. In 2009 we placed 24 children for adoption in our domestic adoption program. Since the beginning of 2010 we have placed 5 children for adoption throughout the province of Alberta. We continue to be busy working with a number of birth parents throughout Alberta.

When we reflect on our work with families, there are a few common themes that arise; new adoptive parents are excited and amazed at how much their lives change with the addition of a child, no matter if its their first, second, or third. It is often difficult to anticipate how much change there will be, but one thing that is certain is that with each new child that joins their family life is completely different than before.

Maintaining connections with birth parents is vitally important for children and each family's relationship is unique and changes over time. Many adoptive families, who had been anxious about ongoing contact with birth parents before a placement, find that they have developed a deep bond and trust with their child's birth family as they share the intensely emotional experiences following the child's birth and transition into their family. Maintaining connections may challenge individuals to step out of their comfort zone, but builds a bridge for their children who will inevitably rely on that connection to their birth family roots in the milestones ahead.

For those that are on the wait list, the anticipation of a child joining their family can be both exciting yet difficult, not knowing when or if a placement will ever happen. For some couples they find that connecting with other couples who are also on our wait list to be very helpful. For others they find that keeping their lives busy and active to be the best way of managing the uncertainty of the wait. We are always available to those that are on our wait list, please don't hesitate to give us a call if you are wondering how things are going with placements, or if you just need to talk.

In our International Adoption Program we have seen families welcome children from a variety of countries including China, Ethiopia, Haiti and Ghana. With each country the families have experienced unique challenges, and are so happy to have brought their child home to Alberta. Interest in international adoption remains strong, but we advise families that adoption from another country is an ever changing picture. We caution families considering international adoption to research the details of how adoption is currently handled in the country that they are interested in and to talk to other families who have adopted from that country.

As the Director of Adoption By Choice I am very proud of our staff who continue to provide amazing service to adoptive and birth parents. We feel very privileged to help facilitate the beginning stages of so many families coming together. 2010 has been a busy start, and we look forward to our continued work in bringing families together.

~ Ramone



NEW ARRIVALS!! ~ ABC PLACEMENTS

WIECHNIK — Lane & Gerri Wiechnik along with birth parents Sarah and Josh and all of the many grandparents, are proud to announce the arrival of **Isabella**.

Born Oct. 24, 2009 at 4lbs 1.4 ounces & 17 inches long.

Isabella Wiechnik



UGANECZ— John and Tammy are thrilled to announce the arrival of their beautiful son **Johnny Michael Jacob**. Born on November 12, 2009, weighing 6lbs 8ozs, 19 3/4" long. We wish to send a very special thank you to our birth parents (and guardian angels) Jacqueline and James for this most precious gift and for making our dreams of becoming a family come true. We could have never imagined the blissful happiness, a child could truly bring! A special thanks also to Sheila for helping us with our adoption needs! True happiness has been becoming a parent!

Johnny Michael Jacob Uganecz



BOLLINGER — Best Christmas present ever! Jim and Tracy are thrilled to announce the arrival their son **Jake Dexter**. Jake was born August 21, 2008 & was welcomed into his forever home on December 15, 2009. A huge thanks to Laura and the gang at ABC for all their hard work and guidance on our journey and of course thanks to Jake's birth family for trusting us to parent this beautiful little boy.

Jake Dexter Bollinger



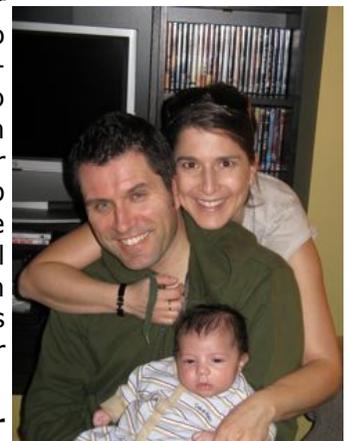
MICHAUD— Charles, Shannon & big brother Lincoln are elated to announce the arrival of our beautiful baby girl **Taneisha Christine** born December 31, 2009. We are truly grateful for the time and effort given by Sherri and Sheila in facilitating her placement. We are excited to welcome Kristi, Martin and their family to become a part of our family.

Taneisha Christine Michaud



MILLER— Jonathan and Anne-Marie are thrilled to welcome home **Nathan (Nate) Edward**, born on December 27th, 2009. Nathan was born at Foothills hospital and brought home just a day later. We have been truly blessed, and would like to thank Alanna and her family for this precious boy, who has finally joined his forever family! We'd like to thank her from the bottom of our hearts for this wonderful gift, her understanding and maturity through the process. We will always be grateful to her for making our family complete, he has already changed our hearts! In addition, we want to give a HUGE thank you to ABC, especially Laura for her hard work and devotion and for taking time over the holiday break to help facilitate and (hold our hands) through the process. We thank the entire team at ABC for helping us to complete our family. Nathan is doing very well - doing what all healthy babies should do. He's also enjoying his time with family members and friends along with getting big wet kisses on his fingers and toes from his little 'french bulldog' (sister) Laguna! Nathan truly was our Christmas miracle, that is one holiday season we'll never forget!

Jonathan, Anne-Marie and Nathan Miller



INTERNATIONAL ARRIVALS!!

BLAKE— Jim and Heather Blake of Edmonton, are thrilled to announce the arrival of their 6th & 7th addition! **Erica-Tsion** (13) & **Samson** (10) came to their new family from Ethiopia on November 29, 2009. It was a wonderful Christmas. Thanks to Sheila Feehan at Adoption By Choice, CAFAC Adoption Agency, and the wonderful, loving staff at Kebebe Tsehay and Kechene Orphanages in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Heather and Jim hope more people consider older child international adoption, as it has been a very positive, breathtaking experience! Love, Heather, Jim, Dylan (14), Erica-Tsion (13), Thomas (12), Samson (10), Lauren (9), Reid (6) and Samra (3).



**Erica-Tsion and
Samson Blake**

WOYCENKO— Daryl and Tammy arrived home from China December 18, 2009 with **Tanner** born February 13, 2007.

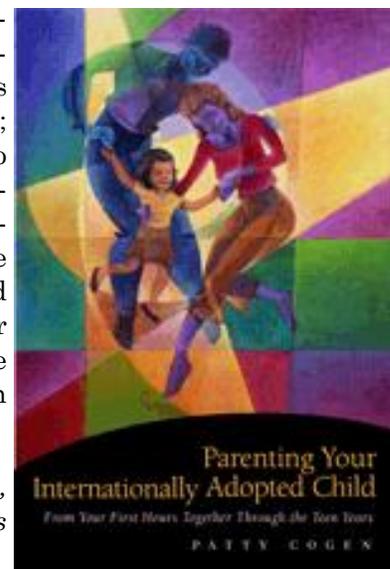
“Welcome Home to All our Angels”

Recommended Reading:

Parenting your Internationally Adopted Child by Patty Cogen

The number of international adoptions by American families has tripled over the past fifteen years. Internationally adopted children face challenges very different from those of domestically adopted kids, and this book is a comprehensive guide that specifically addresses these unique issues, from the time of adoption all the way through the child's teen years. Patty Cogen, a therapist who counsels adopted children and their families, explains how to help a child adopted between the ages of six months and five years cope with the challenge of the Big Change, bond with his or her new parents, become a part of the family, and develop a positive self-image that incorporates both American identity and ethnic origins. Parents waiting to meet their adoptive children will appreciate Cogen's advice about preparing for the trip and handling the first meeting. The author's main focus, though, is the child's adaptation over the next months and years. Cogen explains how to deal with the child's "mixed maturities"; how (and why) to tell the child's story from the child's point of view; how to handle sleep problems and resistance to household rules; and how to encourage eye contact, ease transitions and separations, and deal with problematic anniversaries (birthdays, adoption day, Mother's Day). With advice on language and school difficulties and the development of self-control and independence, Cogen guides adoptive parents all the way through their children's teen years. This book is sure to be an invaluable resource not only for parents, but also therapists and teachers who work with internationally adopted children.

Check your local library or book store for a copy, or you can order this book, and many more adoption books online from Tapestry Books (www.tapestrybooks.com).



ABC's Annual Picnic

Mark Your Calendars!

Date: Saturday, May 29, 2010

Time: 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Where: Bowness Park, Site 1

Over the years, our Annual Picnic has been a highlight at ABC! Adoptive families and birth families come together with the special children in their lives for a fun afternoon. It's a great chance for the families to connect, and for all of the adopted children (and all siblings) to meet & play with other adopted children.

This year ABC will be hosting a barbeque, plus we will have games, activities and lots of time to visit with other families. More details and a map will be included in our next newsletter—don't forget to save the date and join us!



PROMOTION IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Are there places in your community that you think should know more about ABC and the services we offer to birth parents and adoptive parents? Send us their name and address and we would be happy to send out brochures.

You may want to consider:

- Doctor's offices
- Counseling services
- Social agencies
- Resource centers

Thank You

Thank you to Lisa, Jim, Samantha and Jayse Chochohlik, and birth mother Gillian who shared their adoption story at the Calgary workshop in January. Also thank you to Neil, Arlene and Nathaniel Thomsen who also shared their own story at the November workshop in Edmonton.

We are very thankful to all our adoptive and birth families that come and share their journey with couples that are just starting their own journey. Your joys and struggles help other families start on their own paths to adoption.

A great big thank you to Carl and Susan Battelino for their help with the Edmonton Christmas Party! We had a great time!!

A Note from Carol Lamb

This note is long overdue, but in the 15 months since I left Adoption By Choice, I have made time to think about the next steps in my professional life. The time was a great opportunity for me to really consider what I *can* do and what I *want* to do to continue to contribute to the community. As you might know I had an amazing trip to Turkey, Egypt, and Jordan in the Fall of '08 and in '09 I put my sights on participating in the World Masters Games in Sydney, Australia. I did it!! I ran the half marathon and played in the golf event and though I did not bring home any medals -I had a wonderful time - 29,000 participants in the Games from 91 countries..now that was an eye opener!!

In the Spring of '09 I was approached by Eric Crowell of Awesome Journey to join his team of leadership coaches. Initially I thought, 'what could I contribute to a leadership coaching company?' but what I realized is that I am *passionate* about helping people and organizations get the results they are looking for...It's really what I was doing alot of in the last couple of years as Program Director at ABC - as we moved the agency to consider new challenges that expanded the original boundaries of the agency. I was definitely doing social work but I also had the privilege of driving a bus of willing and competent professionals to think bigger about how ABC could help the larger adoption community achieve its goals for more kids and families.

I had actually worked with Eric for a couple of years before I left ABC. The process that I went through with him was instrumental in ensuring that the transition to new leadership at the agency would be seamless and I became aware of what part I needed to play in leading ABC through that change process. I am very proud of the work that the new team at ABC is doing under Ramone's incredibly capable stewardship. It is a legacy that I am very proud of...ABC has successfully launched and now it's time for me to walk the talk! My 'gap year' is over....and I am ready to rock!!

What I am most excited about are the opportunities that lie ahead for me to help individuals and organizations break through the barriers that are keeping them from achieving their goals. I think it's all about *living* and *leading* with intention and authenticity; *living* and *learning* from a foundation that is in alignment with core values and as a leader it's about *inspiring*, *empowering* and *encouraging* others - while being mindful of how *internal structures* and *processes* of the organization, *effective communication skills* and having *executional goals* - will drive achieving personal and organizational results.

As usual my timing was impeccable (!) -arriving onto the leadership scene when the world was cratering - literally...but this last year has afforded me the opportunity to work with leaders and companies/ organizations during a time of crisis - to plan and then deliver a more useful process to achieve results which overcome the barriers that fear brings.

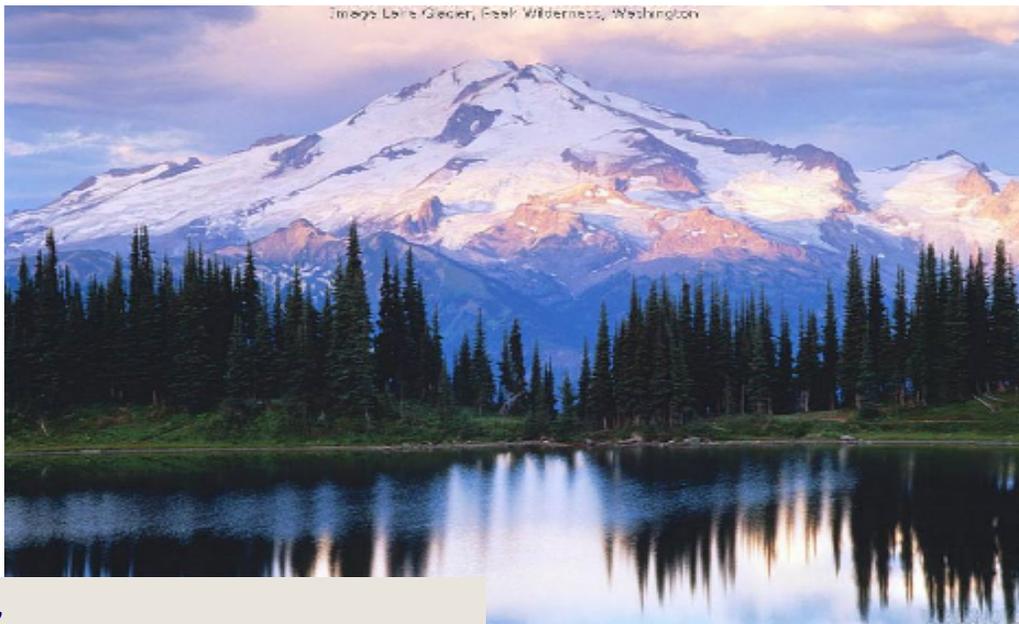
So here are my new co-ordinates. Please drop me a line to let me know how things are in your world and I would love to hear if you or the organizations you are connected to need some help to make a real and sustainable difference in the year ahead.

Carol Lamb, MSW, RSW
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On Children

~ by Kahlil Gibran

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.
You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them,
but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.
You are the bows from which your children
as living arrows are sent forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite,
and He bends you with His might
that His arrows may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;
For even as He loves the arrow that flies,
so He loves also the bow that is stable.



*I Believe....
That our background and circumstances
may have influenced who we are,
But, we are responsible for who we become.*

**Visit our website at:
www.adoptionbychoice.ca
To see our photo album, events
and much more!**