

PLAYGROUNDS

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The Newsletter of Hopscotch Adoptions, Inc.
Not for Profit, Just for Kids

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Adoption Too Expensive? Get Creative!

*By Chandres Pickett—mother of 5 beautiful children
(two adopted from Bulgaria in 2013)*

When we began talking about international adoption, the most intimidating aspect of the process was financial. We didn't have \$30,000+ just sitting in a savings account, and we would prefer not to have personal or home equity loans mounting. The options left to us were applying for grants and fundraising. Most grants require that you be farther along in the process before applying, so fundraising became our first priority.

I began looking at other families' ideas and seeing what was successful for them. Then I spent the next fourteen months, throughout our adoption, working toward our goal. I approached local businesses for assistance. We did online giveaways, offering week-long vacations, a local YMCA membership, a year's worth of free Chick-Fil-A and Amazon gift certificates, all donated to us. I offered to haul off friends' unused baby and child gear and clothes, and tagged everything for an indoor "yard" sale, advertising only on a local facebook yard sale group. I set up three different facebook auctions, with items ranging from costume jewelry I no longer wore to purses to cupcakes made to order by a friend and local baker. Both local and out-of-town friends added items to those auctions. We had direct sales parties, such as [Thirty-One](#), [Pampered Chef](#), [Norwex](#), etc. Some donated items were sold on [eBay](#). For several

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months, I sewed one doll a week, and auctioned it on [Facebook](#).

We also did larger events in the community. The first was a soccer tournament/5k, with some friendly competition between two local adopting families. The second was a quarter auction, where people bought

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A Letter from Our Executive Director

Dear Hopscotch Families,

The Hopscotch staff has been busy traveling to our program countries, attending [conferences](#) and [workshops](#) to improve our services to your family, and creating new [partnerships](#) that we hope will ultimately better serve each of you. This letter to you will also serve as a program and country update.

This spring I was fortunate enough to travel to Georgia, Armenia and Morocco. In [Georgia](#) we celebrated the successful completion of Georgia's first Hague adoption case. Though it was a rocky start, the final process in country went like clockwork, due to the hard work and great advocacy of the [Social Service Agency](#) and our attorney, Giorgi Kiknadze. We hope to complete two more cases in the coming months. Meetings with the Social Service Agency and [US Embassy Consul in Tbilisi](#) were informative and very useful. If a family is open to non-correctable special needs, we would encourage you to register your dossier in Georgia. The only financial commitment for international service fees is the cost of translation and shipping. All other international service fees will be due upon receipt of the Article 16 package. It is a very affordable program with a single trip, open to married couples and single women. If you are interested please [contact us!](#)

After departing Georgia, I ventured south to [Armenia](#) for another incredibly productive trip. Meetings with our [US Embassy Consul in Yerevan](#) were centered around stories of the success children are enjoying through the benefit of adoption. Thanks to many of our families that allowed us to use your family's photos, stories and videos, it was really a wonderful point of connection on an emotional level and a reminder of what great things we can do together for kids in need of a permanent family. We also met and shared the same presentation with the [Ministry of Justice, Civil Affairs](#). The appreciation for a glimpse into the lives of your happy families, beyond our post placement reports, was priceless. Your stories gave credibility to continue to support international adoption as a viable alternative for children waiting for a permanent family. With the permission of the Ministry of Justice, Civil Affairs, we visited all of the orphanages we have placed children from as well as new orphanages where children are waiting for their chance to have a family. Several of those children have since been matched.



Finally, the world wide tour took me to [Morocco](#) to meet with our new partner in person. He is all that we had hoped he would be and more. We are very excited to have the opportunity to work with him and it is clear he is wise, kind and well respected no matter which city we visited. Hopscotch families will be in excellent care during their time in Morocco. We met with the [Consul](#) section and were saddened to learn that the current Consul is taking a new post this summer. We hope the newly assigned Consul will have a strong interest in advocating for American families and Moroccan children in need of permanent families. All of the orphanages we visited expressed their frustration of the Ministry of Justice's circular which recommended Kafala suspension to foreigners. Each shared how overwhelmed they were with the number of abandoned babies that arrive daily, disappointment in local families returning children more and more frequently and how out of touch the Ministry of Justice seemed to be regarding the plight and future of the children that need the most protection.

As of this writing, four American families have been successfully granted Kafala and issued a letter to leave the country. The families should be home by the time this letter is in print. Additionally, more than 40 families of various nationalities have been permitted to leave the country with their children and many more departures are anticipated. Three American families were issued visas to bring their children home and the judges in several cities and

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Adoption Too Expensive?

paddles and bid quarters on items ranging in value from \$25-\$100. We had a soup and sandwich lunch at church, followed by a dessert auction, with items made by people in our church and local friends; it was the most fun fundraiser we had!

In all, we fundraised over \$20,000 in fourteen months. There was a lot of work involved and I made so many trips to the post office, but every fundraiser was worth it!



Additional Financial Resources

Need Additional Financial Resources? Check out [Resources4Adoption](#) where you will find informative information regarding grants, useful tools, helpful webinars and other great financial resources.



The Universal Accreditation Act of 2012 and What it Means for Your Adoption

Starting July 14, 2014 the Universal Accreditation Act of 2012 will enter into effect. This Act was established in order to make standards uniform for all adoption agencies that provide adoption services in intercountry adoptions. Now that the Act has passed, any agency, approved person, facilitator, or charitable organization providing these adoption services in Hague Convention or Non-Hague convention cases must be Hague Accredited.

You may be asking yourself "how will this impact my adoption?". If you are a Hopscotch client, you will not be affected because our agency is Hague Accredited through November 16, 2016. If you pursue an adoption after July 14, 2014, you must work with a placing agency that is Hague Accredited, regardless if the country you wish to adopt from is a Hague Convention country or not. You can continue to work with adoption service providers that are not Hague



HAGUE ACCREDITED

Accredited, as long as there is another agency that is Hague Accredited supervising the non-Hague Accredited agency.

A copy of the Universal Accreditation Act is available in pdf format [here](#).

Source: The United States Department of State (http://adoption.state.gov/adoption_process/faqs/uaa_2012.php)

Welcome Home

**132 Million Orphans Worldwide...Minus
a Few to Hopscotch Forever families!
(Now that is something to celebrate!)**



If you would like to celebrate your child coming home please send an email to Michelle Moreau (michelle@hopscotchadoptions.org) and we will include your celebration in our next quarterly issue.



When Waiting Hurts...



Hopscotch annually dedicates the month of July to Evan Moses Haufler. Hopscotch, family and friends commemorate the passing of Evan Haufler in July of 2010. He was a precious child that brought so much joy to everyone he met. Evan joined his family in Tbilisi, Georgia in July 2010 and then suddenly departed to be with his heavenly

Father. We hope Evan's life will motivate everyone responsible for children in care, to expedite a child's

union to their family, in hopes of avoiding another preventable tragedy. His life is still being celebrated, but we imagine this world as such a sweeter place, if only Evan could have stayed a little longer.

Let this child's legacy be a reminder to parents, our own government and our future children's government to not wait, to do their very best to bring a child into a permanent biological or adoptive family as expediently as possible. Evan's story reminds us to work for and demand change, because children cannot wait.

Watch This Video Now:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=8Ums4IYv3XI



Volunteer Spotlight

Hopscotch is celebrating two amazing moms (aka Reunion of Epic Proportion Designers)!! Maribeth Diver and Denise Wessels, moms to two beautiful and charming Armenian princesses, took on the daunting task of organizing this year's Hopscotch Adoptions' Armenian Angel's Reunion. If you have attended a reunion in the past, you know this was no easy feat! The reunion was hosted in Lancaster, Pennsylvania August 2-4, 2013. Undoubtedly, they had very big shoes to fill since previous reunions hosted by Eric Diekhans in Chicago, and Kelley Hunt Madden in New York, were all big hits with Hopscotch families. It takes a tremendous amount of work and organizational skills to set a successful reunion in motion. Hopscotch could not do this without the enthusiasm and generous gift of time and creative energy from our families.

If you are interested in co-hosting the 2014 reunion, [contact us](#) or connect with [Maribeth Diver](#) to get the scoop on what it takes to make a reunion rock!

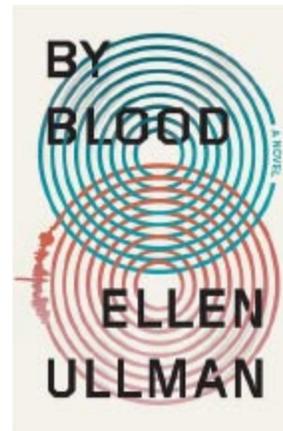
Hopscotch Family Book Review

We asked our families what books they found useful during or after their adoption process. One Hopscotch mom, Susan Weiner, offered this book for your consideration:

By Blood, by author Ellen Ullman

The novel is told from the point of view of an eccentric academic who rents an office in a desolate part of San Francisco...that just happens to be next to a therapist's office. The therapist has one client who always wants her to turn off the fan (I think), so the narrator hears everything she says. Turns out that this client was adopted by a very uptight couple, who have hidden from her the true facts of her adoption-which involve Germany during World War II. She goes in search of her birth mother. Ellen Ullman is a great writer, and this takes a little time to get into, but I couldn't put it down. Obviously this is for parents, and it takes place in the era of closed adoption,

so is not really "relevant" except in its depiction of the adoptee's hunger to know.....



Thanks to each of you that continue to participate in post adoption reporting and to those that have gone the extra mile and continue to send us updates and photos. They are cherished and lift us each day when we see the children growing and thriving in their forever family. We love to hear from you!

Culture Clash: When Should I Get My Foster Daughter's Ears Pierced?

By Rebecca from Fosterhood

When should I get my infant foster daughter's ears pierced? It was the furthest thing on my mind until case workers, friends, and strangers who identify as black began asking me about it daily. That is, they were asking me about my black foster daughter's ears, but made no mention toward my similarly-aged, white-looking (she's 1/2 Jewish and 1/2 Hispanic) foster daughter.

In talking with friends, I expressed that I do want to get my 7-month-old black foster daughter's ears pierced now (with her mom's consent), but not my lighter-skinned 3-month-old daughter. Why is that? I started to ask around amongst my white friends who echoed my involuntary, visceral response to the topic. Earrings on a black baby are adorable, but on a white baby they look was described as "cheap" or "trashy." These descriptions are always whispered in shame. Where do these stereotypes arise? How do these biases come about? And do we need to talk about it in order to undo them?

I've spent several hours searching academic literature and even the internet for a break-down of the average age of ear piercing within different cultures, but I've come up empty. My unofficial poll of

the age in which parents should get their child's ears pierced goes something like this:

African-American/
Black = 4-6 months
Hispanic = soon after birth

Low-income whites
= toddler age

High-income whites
= between age 7-10

From a health and safety perspective, no major pediatric medical association takes a stand regarding appropriate age for ear piercing nor do they indicate that it's harmful. Parents are left to make the ear piercing decision based on culture and tradition, which includes factors like ethnic background and socio-economic status.

I'd love to hear what age you got your ears pierced and how you think (or don't think) skin color and income plays an unconscious part. Most importantly, I'd like for any discussion I've opened-up to be respectful of all people's differences.



You Said It We Heard It:



Thank you to those who participated in our quality service survey in January/February of this year. We always appreciate how open and honest your responses are and use that feedback to better improve the services we provide. The majority of the responses indicated that you valued Hopscotch's quick communication, accessibility, patience and compassion. Hopscotch strives to be there for you when you need us and will continue to respond to you in a timely manner with detailed information. The majority of the responses also indicated that you find Hopscotch's social media outlets useful, informative and enjoyable. Hopscotch will continue to regularly update these outlets and making sure all families are aware of these opportunities.

Your feedback also indicated that you would like Hopscotch to have more presence in the countries

that we work in. We couldn't agree more. [Robin Sizemore](#), Executive Director, was able to visit [Republic of Georgia](#), [Armenia](#) and [Morocco](#) earlier this year and had a productive time meeting with our in-country partners, Embassy officials, governmental officials and orphanage directors. Our goal is to visit [Ghana](#) in 2013 to help grow our program and maintain positive relationships with Ghanaian officials and Embassy officials.

Unfortunately, there was a low response rate with this particular quality service survey. We want to make sure your voice is heard with any feedback you might have. Do you have suggestions for Hopscotch for our next quality service survey? We would love to hear from you. Please contact [Michelle Moreau](#) if you have any suggestions.

If we haven't met before

It's time to put a face with an email and voice. At [Hopscotch](#), we are here to answer your questions. No matter who you speak with, we'll make sure you get the answers you need. Below you'll see all of Hopscotch's staff and our areas of expertise.



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Oversees all agency operations, international program functions, and government compliance.



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USCIS questions
Waiting Children Profiles



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Letter from Our Executive Director



the embassy report families born into the Muslim faith are expected to process soon. Each court is interpreting the circular and imposing their own measure of supervision. Families that left the country with their children recently, were asked to register with their regional [Moroccan consulate](#), attend holiday and culture functions and to teach their children the precepts and culture of Islam. Hopscotch has always required this of our families and welcomes the possibility of referrals arriving sooner.

Later this fall, we will be traveling to [Ghana](#). Hopscotch is proud to announce that we have obtained our business and non-governmental organization licenses. Upon the restructure of the current adoption process, we look forward to resuming referrals. In the meantime, all families with matched

children have successfully completed court and will soon file their I-600 petitions.

In addition, [Michelle Moreau](#), MSW, Ghana Program Coordinator, and I have joined Kybele and Forsyth Country Day school's efforts to build a school for children in the region where our partner continues to care for children and families through his own initiatives. Soon a library will be built to allow books to be retained on the current school premise. Hopefully, land will be purchased soon and great things will develop quickly for the children. If you want to support this initiative, [click here](#).

Warmest regards always,

Robin