



June 2011 Family Connections Christian Adoptions The E-Heartbeat

I first saw Kelsi Macklin about 19 years ago in a grim back building of an orphanage compound in China. I was there accompanying a group of Family Connections adoptive families who were picking up their babies. The orphanage director, a slim nervous man in a denim pants suit, had given us a tour of the orphanage but it was not until the last day there that he motioned mysteriously for me to follow him outside.



As we climbed the worn stairs to the second floor of a building set apart from the rest, several teen age children passed on their way down. Laughing and talking, they walked with unsteady gait, some on crutches, some lurching with palsy. The director led me into a cold, dimly lit room with cement walls and floor. I was unprepared for the room full of crippled children. Some were strapped to potty chairs, some crawled on the floor, some sat on the cement floor. The children were so happy to see a visitor. Smiles blossomed and eager hands reached out to touch me. My heart broke to pieces.

I held back tears and was led into the baby room. This was a bustling place filled with babies, some wailing, some sucking propped bottles, some sound asleep. An energetic, smiling caretaker thrust one into my arms and I gazed down into a little face split by cleft lip and palate. Then I noticed that each baby had something--a facial hemangioma, a missing limb, burn scars....I knew that there would be many families who would like to adopt these beautiful children, in spite of their medical challenges. A sad eyed little girl caught my eye and I asked if I could take her picture. She sat quietly on the table, holding a soft toy in one hand, the other hand burned beyond use. I snapped the photo you see on this page of Kelsi Macklin.

In our next E-Heartbeat, Kelsi, now a lovely young woman, will share her experience of her recent trip to China to work in an orphanage.

Audrey Foster



“Our Good and Perfect Gift”

Our adoption journey started in October 2008 and ended with the finalization two years later.

Going to meetings, classes, and doing ALL the paperwork, (which I enjoyed be the way) took A LOT of time. Having three bio children already, made this journey even more real and special when we began looking at “waiting children.” Dennis and I ended up going to two Adoption Fairs, (which I highly recommend). At the second Fair in Sacramento, we were blessed to meet Fresno County. They were actually super excited to meet us in person, because they had previously considered us for a sib set. We were not chosen because the boy had an allergy and our home would not have been good for him.

So after Fresno County met us at the Family Fair things went quickly. We were matched with two children and had the disclosure meeting. The day we were to meet the sib set, the foster Mother changed her mind and decided to adopt them. Boy, were we crushed!

Well, we believe all is in God's plan and there is a reason for everything. Those children just weren't meant to be ours. If that hadn't happened we wouldn't be where we are today, with our forever son Elliot Dennis Verhoeven. We were matched and met him three weeks later. We signed finalization papers Oct. 20, 2010, exactly two years from our first meeting at FCCA. Cool right?!

On Nov. 29.2010, in court, Elliot Dennis, (now D.J) became our forever son. Our bio children Elyse, Brooke and Travis have all welcomed and loved him as a brother from the beginning. They have always been a part of the process, sometimes on a need to know basis, but other than that they have known everything that was going on. We have had a huge, mega roller coaster ride of emotions and events but every moment was worth it .

We want to thank Patricia Salas, our wonderful social worker who helped make all of this happen for our family and Diane Wagers, who works so hard to bring children to their forever family. Thank you all at FCCA for all that you do for waiting children.

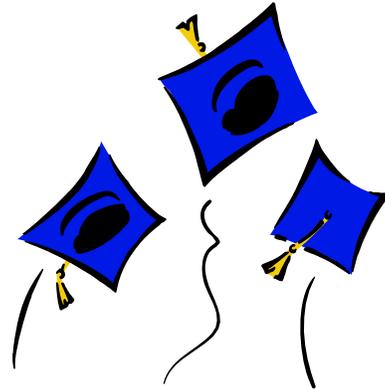
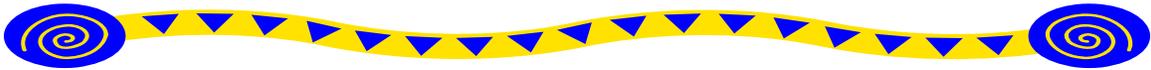
Let us always remember: Every good and perfect gift is from above...James 1:17

The Verhoeven Family
Dennis and Gloria
Elyse, Brooke
D.J. and Travis



**CONGRATULATIONS, BRITTANY THORNBURG,
GRADUATE OF CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE
UNIVERSITY, SAN LUIS OBISPO!! BRITTANY WAS
ADOPTED AS AN INFANT FROM KOREA THROUGH
FAMILY CONNECTIONS IN COOPERATION WITH
HOLT ADOPTIONS.**

247 hours spent in the dark room 2 terms apx
273.5 units wa [president]
12 design studios 3 seasons of soccer 1,296
107 trips to Obee drafting dots
firestone's 0 stings 33 rolls of film
1 minor volunteer hours 1 thesis: 5 years
in photography 480 disPLACED of sleep deprivation
**1 bachelor of
architecture**



Mali PetersonWood, was adopted March 1998 from Ethiopia when 10 months old. Graduated 8th Grade June 2011. At her eight grade graduation in June, 2011, Mali gave a beautiful graduation speech where she spoke about her journey of learning to trust people and the love from her family that she has learned to believe in.

Upcoming Events...



San Luis Obispo Office: Family Picnic Saturday, August 13, 2011 from 11 to 2 at French Park. Fun and games with a clown. FCCA will supply hamburgers, hotdogs, condiments and bottled water. Families bring food to share: A to L bring dessert , M to Z bring side dishes.

Modesto Office: Family Picnic Saturday, August 20, 2011 from 11 to 2 at Freedom Park, Modesto. FCCA will barbeque hamburgers and hotdogs. Families please bring a dish to share and your drinks. Games, crafts, sprinklers.

Macy's shop for a Cause: Saturday, August 27, 2011. Shoppers get 25% off when they shop with gift cards bought from any Family Connections Office. Buy as many \$5 cards as you wish. Family Connections gets to keep the whole amount, thanks to the generosity of Macy's. Use cards one day only at any Macy's throughout the state.

Peruvian Adoptive Families: Come to a gathering in Modesto the first weekend in July. For details see the group's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/peruvianadoptees or email Analisa Freitas at analisafreitas1@gmail.com



Attention Adoptive Families! - There is a new post-adoption resource available to you, via a phone line for adoptive families. It is offered through Focus on the Family and will be open Monday through Friday, 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. (Western Standard Time). Trained staff will be ready to take your questions and provide advice and direction. The phone number is 1-800-232-6459 (1-800-AFAMILY).