

From Our Executive Directors

Since its inception in 1990, Adoption Associates, Inc. (AAI) has been dedicated and passionate about building families through adoption. This commitment comes from our belief that adoption was first God's idea in that He adopted us, and gave us adoption as a pattern to use in bringing together children who need parents, and parents who need children.

When Richard Van Deelen opened AAI in 1990, it wasn't like he had a great vision or plan for what it would become. However, he had many years of experience in adoption at every level, from casework with birth mothers and adopting couples, to managing and marketing adoption programs. He had gained his experience from adoption involvement through the States and overseas. Very important in this early development of the agency was the fact that Dick especially wanted to help unmarried, pregnant women understand the advantages to both themselves and to their babies of adoption by loving, stable, two parent families. This special focus on adoption drew many wonderful staff to the agency—staff who remain at AAI and make adoption the best it can be for the young women who come for services.

Also, within a few years AAI moved into international adoptions, doing so just as international adoptions exploded in growth. Tapping into that high repository of "room for one more families", large numbers of children began to "come home" from China, Russia, Guatemala, Ethiopia, and other smaller countries. Soon childless couples also began choosing an international program rather than domestic because wait times were less. It was especially gratifying to see that race and ethnicity were no longer barriers to children getting parents.

Eventually in 2004, it was time for Dick to retire. The choice of successor was easy for the Board. It was to be Jane Bareman who had many years earlier caught the vision and was prepared, by ever increasing levels of responsibility, to take over as Executive Director. The transition was uneventful, but no one realized that Jane would be at the agency helm through the most difficult years of AAI's existence. Eventually, Dick would become President of the Board where he is still involved with policy making and financial management.

So, what has been accomplished? By God's grace, AAI has now been instrumental in placing over 4,400 children, born in the U.S. or born abroad. Looking back, while Dick had not envisioned anything special, God had other plans and AAI has accomplished so many placements because He has guided, directed, and blessed the work at AAI.



As for Jane Bareman, she had no prior experience in adoption before joining AAI. However, she remembers being immediately attracted to the work when she first heard of an opening at the agency. She has shared that "it caught my heart when I first heard about it and thought about being able to become personally involved in such wonderful work." She has guided the agency through some difficult times, occasioned by the economic downturn beginning in 2007 and continuing today. However, she has remained steadfast in her commitment to the importance of adoption, supported by her very firm faith in our providential God.

Jane has seen the agency grow from just a handful of people to a staff of more than 100 at one time. Now

there are fewer staff, but there are indicators again that the numbers of adoption will increase again as the economy recovers, more birth mothers realize the advantages of adoptions once again, and more countries open their borders to families wanting to give orphans the love and security they need.

All staff at AAI believe that the work of adoption is God's work to which they've been called. Going forward, they know that God will continue to bless "the work of their hands".

OUR MISSION

Adoption Associates, Inc. exists to promote domestic and international adoption for God's glory. The benefits of adoption offered to birth mothers, their children from unplanned pregnancies, and orphaned children abroad are designed to reflect the spirit of adoption modeled by God in Ephesians 1 of the Bible. Accordingly, AAI is a Christian organization, founded on Christian beliefs and values. Pregnancy and adoption services are provided to clients of all faiths.



Domestic Adoption

The domestic program at AAI remains a strong and vital part of Adoption Associates, Inc. The Domestic Adoption Program is committed to providing loving families for children who are born here in the United States and are placed in our care by their birth mothers who desire to give their child the future that they envisioned for them. This is done by both an agency matched adoption, where the agency matches the birth mother and the adoptive couple, as well as a designated, or private adoption. Adoption Associates, Inc. is a leader in providing adoption services to adopting couples through a comprehensive home study process and accompanying education pieces. It has a remarkable reputation for assisting birth parents as they make an adoption plan and enjoy referrals from many sources throughout Michigan. Above all, AAI continually renews its efforts to remain a child-centered agency and to make the best possible decisions for children entrusted to our care.

In 2010, AAI placed 68 infants through our four Michigan offices in Farmington Hills, Jenison, Lansing and Saginaw. Of these, 82% were matched adoptions. AAI continues to attract out of state birth mothers, and caseworkers are spending increasingly more time networking with other agencies, hospitals and centers to reach women in crisis pregnancies. AAI works with women of all races and ethnicities.

2010 Domestic Children Placed

Caucasian = 34
 African-American = 17
 Caucasian/African-American = 10
 Caucasian/Hispanic = 2
 Asian/African-American = 1
 Hispanic/African-American = 1
 African = 2
 Asian = 1

International Adoption

AAI has years of experience in the field of international adoption, expertly guiding clients through the immigration process and preparation of dossier documents required by the foreign governments. AAI also provides risk counseling required by USCIS, and works only with reputable international contacts, closely monitoring and expediting the adoption process for all clients.



CHINA: AAI still has full accreditation with CCAA to place both healthy and special needs children. We have renewed our status with the online system and updated our USB computer key (which provides access to the CCAA database of children) this past October 2010 and will not have to renew again until the fall of 2011. CCAA has developed a second category of children available through their online system. These Special Focus children are those that have not been selected by a family and have remained on the online system for more than two months. CCAA has also implemented, for the first time in the history of this program, the process to adopt two children, either simultaneously or delayed, using one dossier. In late 2010, AAI donated \$5,000 to CCAA for orphanage related projects. We anticipate receiving from CCAA, reports and photos of the projects impacted by this donation. We are excited to have linked 39 families to a total of 40 children with special needs through this online system. AAI brought home 58 children in 2010, 44 of whom were children with special needs and 14 were healthy children. There are 45 clients in process as of 12/31/10.

Relative Number of Placements for AAI International Programs in 2010

China	37%
Ethiopia	32%
Nepal	1%
Russia	29%
Ukraine	1%

ETHIOPIA: AAI continues to be in good standing with our Ethiopia license which is current until December 16, 2012. In 2010 there was a significant change in the process of adopting from Ethiopia. Families are now required to attend a court hearing in order to have their adoption finalized. As a result of this new requirement, there are now two trips required rather than one. 2010 was a steady year in regards to intake of applications and children brought home. There were 50 children placed with 43 adoptive families, three of which were special needs children. Twenty children placed were two years or older.

Number of Client Signups per Country in 2010

China	23
Ethiopia	43
Russia	23

KAZAKHSTAN: In May of 2010, Kazakhstan announced that they would be implementing Hague standards, therefore, no new dossiers would be accepted until further notice. At the end of 2010 they announced that all families who have not yet received a referral would have their dossiers returned to them. When Kazakhstan begins processing new cases, these families will be required to update their dossier with all Hague requirements, if they desire to proceed with a Kazakhstan adoption. Although AAI continues to be approved through the Kazakhstan Consulate in New York, the decision was made to close intake of new applications until further notice. Furthermore, all families that were in AAI's Kazakhstan program have made the decision to discontinue the process.

RUSSIA: In our Russia program AAI placed 44 children this year with adoptive families. The projection for 2011 will remain the same for our Russian program. The number of clients stays around 50. The length of the adoption could be shorter due to the lower number of prospective families.

Finances

With grateful hearts, we are excited to report that 2010 was a year of financial stability at Adoption Associates. Knowing the U.S. economy and challenges in international adoption were factors that would not change overnight, we carefully analyzed our operating budget for 2010 and determined realistic goals which would enable us to keep our focus on placing children into loving forever families. With total revenue outperforming our conservative projected income, we ended 2010 in a strong position with a net income of \$305,599.

We enter into the new year with determination and dedication to remaining financially fit. We continue to regularly review our financial performance in order to proactively identify and address areas of financial concern. During 2010, we slowly began rebuilding our reserve funds in order to sustain the work of the agency during times of economic stress. We are often reminded that, in part, it is the financial stability of the agency that allows us to continue to serve birth mothers, adoptive families, babies and orphans. We praise God for the opportunity and the responsibility He has placed before us, and we thank you for your support of the work we do.



Relative Sources of Income in 2010

Adoptive Placements	60.3%
Travel Services	23.6%
Adoptive Consultations/ Home Studies	12.6%
Contributions	2.7%
Rental Income	.6%
Other	.2%

Fund-raising

The task of fund-raising in the economy of our state and nation this year has been challenging. Financial support is needed to continue our relationships with international orphanages in the countries with which we are working. Our goal is to bring orphaned children into loving, stable families who can love them and give them hope for their futures. Additionally, AAI supports sponsorship programs and income-producing training classes for village parents and children. Support is also needed to upgrade our marketing efforts and resources to reach more birth mothers who are unable to give their babies the homes and opportunities they desire to.

We are grateful for the support of our many donors in 2010. Altogether \$87,582 was donated to support the work we do.

The Quality Car Wash in Holland, Michigan sponsored another Harvest of Hope event for AAI in the fall. For every car wash sold, AAI received a percentage of the sale. Even though it was a very rainy day, AAI realized \$1,196.

The Change A Life—Change The World Gala was held at the new Goei Center in downtown Grand Rapids, Michigan. The format for the evening was another Ten Bid Auction, where several items had been donated by local businesses. Attendees bid on the items, and they were distributed to the winners at the end of the evening. It was an elegant, yet fun, event with a wonderful meal, and we realized a profit of \$33,731 that evening.

The Bottles for Babies project, which began in 2008, continued again this year in 2010. This year two elementary schools participated. The students were taught about the children living in orphanages; they were given a baby bottle to take home in which to collect their change. This gave the children the opportunity to give a donation which was sent to give aid to the children in these orphanages. Their families became involved by providing chores by which the children could earn their coins. Children from Woodbridge Elementary and Holland Christian learned about international adoption and collected \$1,099. We are so honored by this great support from our youngest donors!

An appeal letter is typically sent out to past donors, former adoptive parents and grandparents, and friends of AAI twice each year. The funds from those efforts in 2010 amounted to \$12,108.



Mini-Buses for Ethiopia

In October of 2010, Adoption Associates, Inc. (AAI) launched a campaign to raise funds for two mini-buses for use at Ethiopian orphanages. The orphanage directors had made us aware that they urgently needed good, reliable transportation for their children.

Many of our parents have adopted children from one of these orphanages. They've seen the conditions and are keenly aware of the children who remain there. We've been praying for them and asking God how we could send help for the children who have been left behind. The children often need to be transported from Awassa to Addis Ababa which is a 220km trek. Other uses for the mini-bus are such things as travel into the city, medical appointments, etc.

Many adoptive families were moved to help support one of these orphanages in this way by sending a contribution to Adoption Associates. Altogether we raised \$10,000 and the agency matched the gift with \$10,000, for a grand total of \$20,000. We were so excited to present one of the orphanages with enough funds to purchase a used mini-bus! The other orphanage received a contribution toward their mini-bus fund.

AAI IS SO APPRECIATIVE OF EVERY CONTRIBUTION, BUT MOST OF ALL, THE PRAYERS FOR THESE LITTLE ONES AND THEIR CAREGIVERS!

Marketing

I. Branding

The biggest accomplishment for the marketing department in 2010 was the launching of the new logo. The logo is important as it brings Adoption Associates into the 21st century with its font styling and softer colors. It's every bit as professional as the previous logo, and appeals to the audiences AAI strives to reach every day.

II. Birth Mother Recruitment

The goal for new birth mothers in 2010 was set high. It was a tough year for recruitment of birth mothers and it seems that AAI was not alone in this. The economy may be partly the reason; but possibly the trend of choosing to parent may have affected the lower numbers as well. Below are some of the initiatives made by the team of AAI staff who works to recruit new birth mothers:

1. **Lunch and Learns:** AAI staff went out to several OB/GYN offices to meet with those who interact with women facing unplanned pregnancies. These lunches were very well received by the staff and great conversations took place.

2. **Planadoption.com:** This web site was updated with a new look—updated colors, photography and font treatment. We hope to see the popularity of this site grow as our efforts in SEO increase.

3. **Yellow Pages:** We continue to have a strong presence in yellow page ads throughout Michigan. Forty-nine potential birth moms found us through the yellow pages. Many of the ads were updated towards the latter part of 2010 with the new logo and colors. We continue to try to cut down our costs with this medium, while maintaining a strong presence. We are also trying a new product on yp.com—a pay-per-call and a pay-per-click program. This began in December and it's too soon to determine if it will yield new prospects for us.

4. **Chatting:** We launched a new way for birth moms to get connected to AAI staff in 2010. The chatting feature was added to the new planadoption.com web site. It has yielded a few new leads so far. It's a handy and anonymous way for nervous birth moms to reach an experienced staff person. This is just one more way to attract birth moms who might not otherwise have reached out to us.

5. **Facebook Support Group:** A support group was launched on facebook for birth mothers. This has been an interesting trial. While there is not a lot of dialog going so far, it stands as a safe place for AAI birth mothers to reach out to one another privately. It is also helpful to have a group of birth moms assembled in one place for marketing purposes (to survey them or get a quick opinion).

6. **Referral Source Visits:** This is the most important aspect of recruitment of birth mothers and continues to be a priority for caseworkers as well as the marketing department (to assist in the creation of materials and to help facilitate when needed).

III. Search Engine Optimization

This endeavor started in mid-November of 2010. After much analysis, it was decided that AAI should discontinue spending on pay-per-click advertising and instead shift resources to search engine optimization. This is a lengthy process, but it is believed that the AAI web site will raise in ranking when popular adoption-oriented keywords are used in google searches. As the AAI site raises in ranking, more birth mothers and potential adopting families will discover AAI's programs and services.

IV. Advertising

This past year was a year to hold back a bit on advertising. However, AAI was still present in a number of mediums. The focus for ads was mainly on adopting families. Ads were seen and heard in Adoptive Families magazine, The Grand Rapids Press, The Holland Sentinel, WMUZ radio in Detroit, WJQ in West MI, 105.7 in Grand Rapids, 95.7 in Lansing, Metro Family magazine in Detroit, Lansing State Journal, and others. The focus was on increasing attendance to information meetings. There is always a direct correlation between increasing advertising dollars and attendance.

V. Information Meetings

The informational meetings run by AAI staff continue to be a very important way to gain new adoptive families. There will be a new system put in place to better track the conversion rate of information meeting attendees to adopting family status in 2011.

AAI staff conducted monthly information meetings in all regions (Lansing, West Michigan and Farmington Hills). West Michigan also did meetings in Holland and Ada in 2010 and Lansing continues to do occasional meetings in Saginaw. An additional meeting took place in Traverse City that resulted in one sign up.

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