



Summer 2011

# Family Services of Greater Vancouver

Licensed Adoption Agency

# Adoption Agency News

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## Building Deep Roots – A Celebration of Families

Lots of kids, lots of smiles, lots of food and lots of fun!! This pretty much sums up our first annual **Building Deep Roots – A Celebration of Families** adoption and foster family event held on May 21st, 2011 at Granville Island in Vancouver.

Sponsored by Family Services Licensed Adoption Agency, Bopomo Pictures of Kitsilano and The Carousel Theatre for Young People on Granville Island, this fun filled event saw an afternoon packed with family activities at the Carousel Theatre Rehearsal Space as Bopomo Pictures donated over three hours worth of portrait time as they photographed many of our beautiful FSGV adoptive families. Wow! From all feedback received, the pictures turned out fantastic – big kudos to our friends at Bopomo and to our adoptive families for being such great models!

Children (both little and big) enjoyed building their own deep roots by planting a seedling garden pot that with love and attention will help it to flourish into beautiful flowers. The Vancouver Public Library also joined us for some great story telling activities with loads of interactive fun. And all the parents had the opportunity to participate in a family meetings workshop on children and cooperation: called *“Working together around the House”* hosted by Lyndsay Sieger of FSGV. For everyone else who wanted to just mix and mingle with other adoptive or foster families it was a great opportunity to share their experiences with one another over yummy treats.

Without the generosity and support of our sponsors, this event wouldn't have been possible. Thank you so much to the Victoria Foundation Lex Reynolds Adoption and Permanency Trust Fund for their generous event grant, The Dave Thomas Foundation, Chop Restaurant, Craftworks Society, Terra Breads, Van Houtte Coffee, Pamper Your Soul Spa, Bopomo Pictures, The Carousel Theatre for Young People and of course all our wonderful adoptive and foster families.



## From The Administrator's Desk

As I reflect on our very successful, 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Building Deep Roots – A Celebration of Families event, I am truly amazed at just how far we have built our “Deep Roots”.....

- Those “Roots” have travelled to your extended families.....
- The “Roots” have also travelled to your child's birth mother, birth father and as well their birth extended family.....
- In some cases those “Roots” have also travelled to your child's foster parents and foster siblings....
- Those “Roots” may have also travelled to your child's country of origin and to the orphanage and caregivers they may have had.....
- Those “Roots” have also travelled to your social worker, your child's social worker, and the various Central Authorities.....
- And lastly those “Roots” have travelled to your child who you continue to nurture and support so that they can grow up in a strong family.

Family Services of Greater Vancouver has been “Building Deep Roots” with families for the last 83 years and the Adoption Agency is proud to have helped build “Deep Roots” through adoption for nearly 14 years. Next year's event is already in the planning stages so please stay tuned.

We would like to extend a whole-hearted thank you to all our sponsors including The Victoria Foundation, Bopomo Pictures and the Carousel Theatre for Young People amongst many others whom without their generous support this event would not have been possible.

*Cathy Loftson*

Agency Administrator

## Adoptive Families Picnic

Dear FSGV Adoptive Families,

It is once again time for our annual picnic! We are looking forward to hearing all your new stories and are hoping that you would be able to share experiences of your adoption journeys with others...

The picnic will be held on Saturday, August 6 at 2:00pm at Ryall Park in New Westminster. Please RSVP or direct questions to Andrea at [aflanderkova@fsgv.ca](mailto:aflanderkova@fsgv.ca).

Please bring something small to share with everyone. We are looking forward to seeing you all!

## Mark Your Calendars!

**September 22 @ 7:00pm** - Waiting parents night for clients adopting from or considering China and anyone wanting to learn more about the Waiting Children program, hosted by Chantaa and Andrea.

**October 17 @ 6:00 pm** - Same sex couples who are parenting or waiting, with Leslie and Andrea.

**Playgroup** – For all adoptive parents! We are looking forward to reconnecting with everyone and welcoming our new families on **September 16, October 14, November 18 and December 16.**

If you are interested in refreshing your First Aid knowledge and skills, please contact Andrea ([aflanderkova@fsgv.ca](mailto:aflanderkova@fsgv.ca)). Last year we had a successful session in November; if we have enough applicants we can do it again this year, probably on a weekend.

## Spotlight On... Ethiopia



Next week I will have the pleasure of visiting two of our families that have adopted from Ethiopia - yes children do come home from Ethiopia! After doing their welcome home visits, this visit will be for their first post placement report. As with all of our families adopting from Ethiopia through Imagine and Mission of Tears these families have waited a long time and been on an emotional and financial roller coaster ride. None of our families, our agency or I anticipated Imagine's bankruptcy, additional fees, increased wait times, 2nd dossiers, two trips to Ethiopia and a change of agency. Throughout this challenging process I have worked and spoken with all our families and heard the frustration, anger and sense of injustice. How did all of this happen and what will be outcome? Most of our families have taken a giant leap of faith and continued with their adoption. At the end of the day our families want a child or children to share their lives with and experience the joys and challenges of parenting (In some ways this process has been excellent training for parenting! You have all increased your skills in patience, advocacy and budgeting).

When I visit these families next week they will not talk with me about their challenging journey (even when I ask). They will tell me about their child - how much they have grown, how it seems like they have been part of their family forever, the joy of each new milestone and accomplishment, how the child's smile makes up for a sleepless night and that their child is the most special, smart and talented child in the world. I need to talk about attachment, doctor's visits, child care plans, family support and parenting, yet it all comes back to the joys of parenting and the love they share with their child. P'Nina Shames, an adoptive mother and social worker, likened adoption to giving birth: it can be a very painful process, yet the pain is quickly forgotten when you finally have your child.

### Quote Corner

*The bond that links your true family is not one of blood, but of respect and joy in each other's life.*

--- Richard Bach

These little children have been on their own complex journey from their biological to forever family. They have already experienced many losses in their short life. There will be challenges ahead as parents help their children learn about their past and embrace their future. I am humbled when I visit our families and witness the depth of love, commitment and caring that our parents have for their children and I am so honoured to have been part of the journey. The journey to bring their children home has ended for the families that I will be visiting next week. For the rest of our families the journey continues either with the preparation of the second dossier or waiting for a proposal. My hope is that your child will be home soon, this long adoption journey will be over and you will be enjoying the joys and challenges of parenting.

Warm Regards,  
*Shelley Brownell*  
 Adoption Social Worker

## Spotlight On... Ethiopia *(continued from previous page)*

Ethiopia is a landlocked country located in Africa. The country features some of Africa's highest mountains as well as some of the lowest points below sea level in the world. The landscape ranges from waterfalls to caves to volcanic hot springs to tropical rain forests to deserts. Many of the oldest human fossils known to exist were discovered in Ethiopia!

An interesting fact about Ethiopia is that it has its own calendar, which is roughly 8 years behind the Gregorian calendar that we use in North America.

Ethiopia is well known for its largest export: coffee! In fact, Ethiopia is the original source of the coffee bean. In the near future Ethiopia will also become known for being one of the largest flower and plant exporters in the world.

While Ethiopia has 48 indigenous languages, English is the most widely spoken foreign language and is the medium of instruction in secondary schools. However, primary schools generally teach in Amharic, Oromifa or Tigrinya.

Ethiopia's music is extremely diverse, with different styles deriving from each of the country's 80 ethnic groups. Popular musicians include Mahmoud Ahmed, Teddy Afro, Tilahun Gessesse, Aster Aweke, Muluken Melesse, Bizunesh Bekele, Tadesse Alemu, Alemayehu Eshete, Asnaketch Worku, Ali Birra, Tewodros Taddese, Gigi, and Mulatu Astatke

The most popular sports in Ethiopia are football (soccer) and athletics, with the achievement of winning many Olympic gold medals in track and field.

[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)



## That Gorgeous Hair!

Several of our families have been asking for tips from other adoptive families with regards to their children's hair. We've been kindly provided with the following information and resources which we hope will be of use. Thank you to our families who were able to help us!

Afro Hair Studio  
1969 Commercial Drive  
Vancouver  
604.251.2512  
[www.afrohairstudio.com](http://www.afrohairstudio.com)

Salon Elegant Barber Shop  
802 – 12<sup>th</sup> Street  
New Westminster  
604.759.2969  
[salon-elegant.com](http://salon-elegant.com)

Elsa Hair  
1708 East 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Vancouver  
778.885.0849

Shirel's Salon and Beauty Supply  
813 – 12<sup>th</sup> Street  
New Westminster  
604.540.6672  
[www.shirelsbeauty.com](http://www.shirelsbeauty.com)



Nunu's Hair Salon  
1855 Commercial Drive  
Vancouver  
604.215.8444



Check out Shoppers Drug Mart for a variety of hair care products, as well as the Carols Daughter Line by Sephora ([www.sephora.com](http://www.sephora.com)) and Shuruba ([www.shuruba.com](http://www.shuruba.com)).

## Recent Arrivals!

If you would like to have your family included in the "Recent Arrivals!" section, please email Victoria at [vhood@fsgv.ca](mailto:vhood@fsgv.ca) or call her at 604.736.7613 ext. 4002.

A picture can accompany your announcement should you choose to provide one.



## Your Story

Would you like to share your adoption story with other adoptive families?

Did your family have an interesting experience during the adoption process?

Do you have a funny adoption related anecdote?

If so, we would love to share "your story" in an upcoming newsletter!

Please contact Victoria Hood at 604.736.7613 ext. 4002 or [vhood@fsgv.ca](mailto:vhood@fsgv.ca) for more information.

## Upcoming Events and Seminars

We hope to see you soon! Please contact us at 604.736.7613 for more details regarding any of these events.

<b>Adoptive Families Picnic</b>	<b>August 6</b>
<b>Information Session</b>	<b>August 9</b>
<b>Information Session</b>	<b>September 11</b>
<b>Play Group</b>	<b>September 16</b>
<b>Adoption Education Program</b>	<b>September 17, 18 &amp; October 1, 2</b>
<b>China Waiting Parents Group</b>	<b>September 22</b>
<b>Information Session</b>	<b>October 2</b>
<b>Play Group</b>	<b>October 14</b>
<b>Same Sex Waiting Parents Group</b>	<b>October 17</b>
<b>Information Session</b>	<b>November 6</b>
<b>Play Group</b>	<b>November 18</b>
<b>Information Session</b>	<b>December 4</b>
<b>Play Group</b>	<b>December 16</b>



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### AUGUST 2011

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### SEPTEMBER 2011

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