

Philippine Ambassador Program



Trips

The first Ambassador trip was in 2007, there have 4 more trips over the past seven years with the most recent trip in spring of 2014.

Children

- 44 children between the ages of 9 and 16 participated in the first 4 trips,
- 31 of those children are now home with their forever families in the US.
- Ambassadors continue to actively advocate for 2 other children to find their forever families.

- 7 Children participated in the most recent Ambassador trip, 2 children have potential families identified

- 13 of the children who participated in the program have sadly grown past the age of being able to be adopted into a family in the US. However, LSS and volunteer ambassadors are working with agencies in the Philippines to assist these young adults in reaching their highest potential and live the best life they can in the Philippines.

Although it would be ideal if all the children who participated were matched, we are confident the 31 children who have been matched would not have found their families if they had not participated in the program.

Adjustment

The children that have come through this program have adjusted well, and we attribute that to the preparation and personal experience that past Ambassadors and Ambassador families are able to share with the prospective adoptive parents – before and after placement and adoption

Common issues faced by families who have adopted through the program:

- Children adopted at older ages have commonly been through significant trauma - families need to help their children work through past traumas to facilitate secure bonding and attachment

- Children adopted at older ages have also commonly been abandoned by their birthparents, and have faced neglect in group care – this results in children feeling significant fear of rejection from their adoptive parents, lack of trust, and defiance of adoptive parent's rules
- Children adopted at older ages have learned to survive without a family – it takes work to help them understand they want and need families to care for them

Resources for families:

- Families rely heavily on other Ambassador families for support and encouragement – families communicate frequently
- Prior education is provided in person, and includes information on adopting older children.
- Ambassador family events are coordinated by LSS in partnership with the families at least two times each year
- The past 2 winter/fall get events have featured educational sessions for families and group sessions with children
- Adoption social workers visit families at least once each month for the first 6-9 months of placement, with additional support as needed.
- There is a lack of "adoption competent" therapists available to families – particularly in rural areas. Families and LSS have begun to put together a list of qualified therapists in combination with the Coalition Resources.
- As a Private Adoption Agency we receive calls for support throughout the life of a child.

Contact: Kim Westfahl, Director of Adoption and Foster Care; 414 304-6920