

January 2005



Sports Class

Dear Friends:

Happy New Year everyone! Over 250 children spent New Year's Day with new adoptive families after completing the process with AAI last year. The year before AAI placed nearly 200 children so this is quite a jump. Our dedicated staff is working extra hours to complete adoption processing. We have added one person but simply do not have space for more. Plans are in place for a move to larger quarters this spring.

Meanwhile, the phones have hardly stopped ringing this week with folks concerned about children who may have been orphaned by the tsunami. AAI has had an adoption program in Thailand for more than 20 years. Most of the children available for foreign adoption from Thailand have been older children or children with disabilities or medical issues. With children orphaned by the tsunami, searches will be conducted for extended family members who may be able to take the child. If no relative is available to provide a home, the child will be offered to Thai nationals for adoption. We expect that that process will take many months and that few children will actually become available for foreign adoption. Thailand has a well regulated child welfare and adoption system in place and they will look for foreign adoption only as a last option for these children. We are encouraging those wanting to help to donate through any of the major relief organizations and AAI is donating as well, directly to the welfare system.

In Ethiopia, the situation continues to worsen for orphan children. During the eight months from April to November an average of 8 to 9 children were taken

into care each month. In December there were 20 new children and these were just the most desperate cases. When possible, children were sent to live with relatives or others because we simply do not have room for them. Thankfully 18 children joined adoptive families in December, but still we are not keeping up.

The Layla Building fund continues to grow and at this point we are only about \$15,000 short of the amount needed to break ground. We are also excited about our new ability to take secure donations by credit card over the web. Look for the **Donate Now** button at the bottom of this page. We are so grateful to those who are contributing.

I am looking at a photo of Calle who joined her family just before Christmas last year. She had been diagnosed in Ethiopia with kidney stones and, at the age of three months, weighed just seven pounds. Now at fifteen months she weighs nearly 23 pounds and is a happy, vital, growing girl who can make the sound of a mooing cow and stomp her foot to imitate an elephant, according to her proud mom. She is also free of the kidney stones that dissolved themselves. We love these happy stories and we appreciate your help in making them happen.

I will be in Manchester, New Hampshire on Sunday, January 30th when a gathering of adoptive families and others interested in our work is planned. If you would like more information please give us a call or send me an email.

Happy New Year to all and again, thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

Merrily and Ted