

2013 ANNUAL REPORT

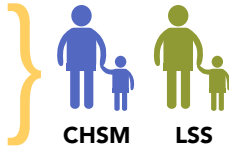


STRONGER TOGETHER

A Year In Partnership

OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE

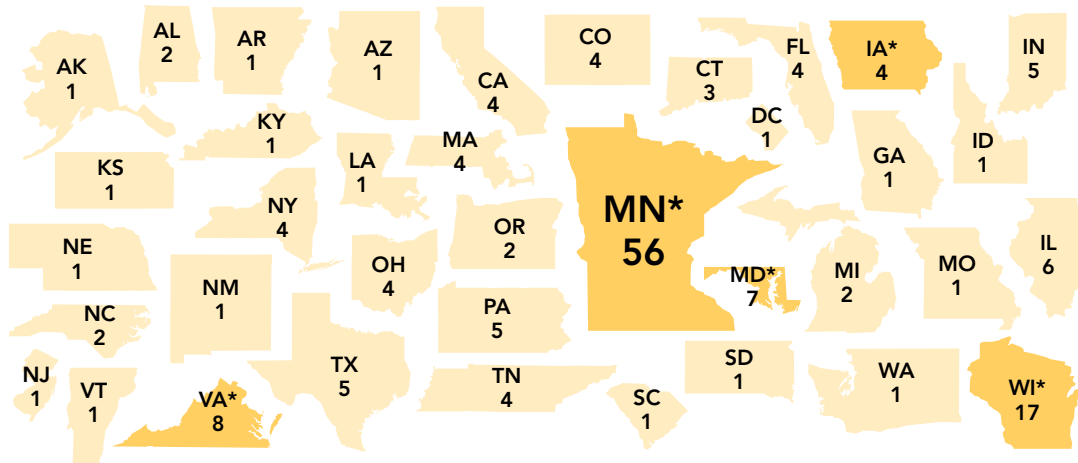
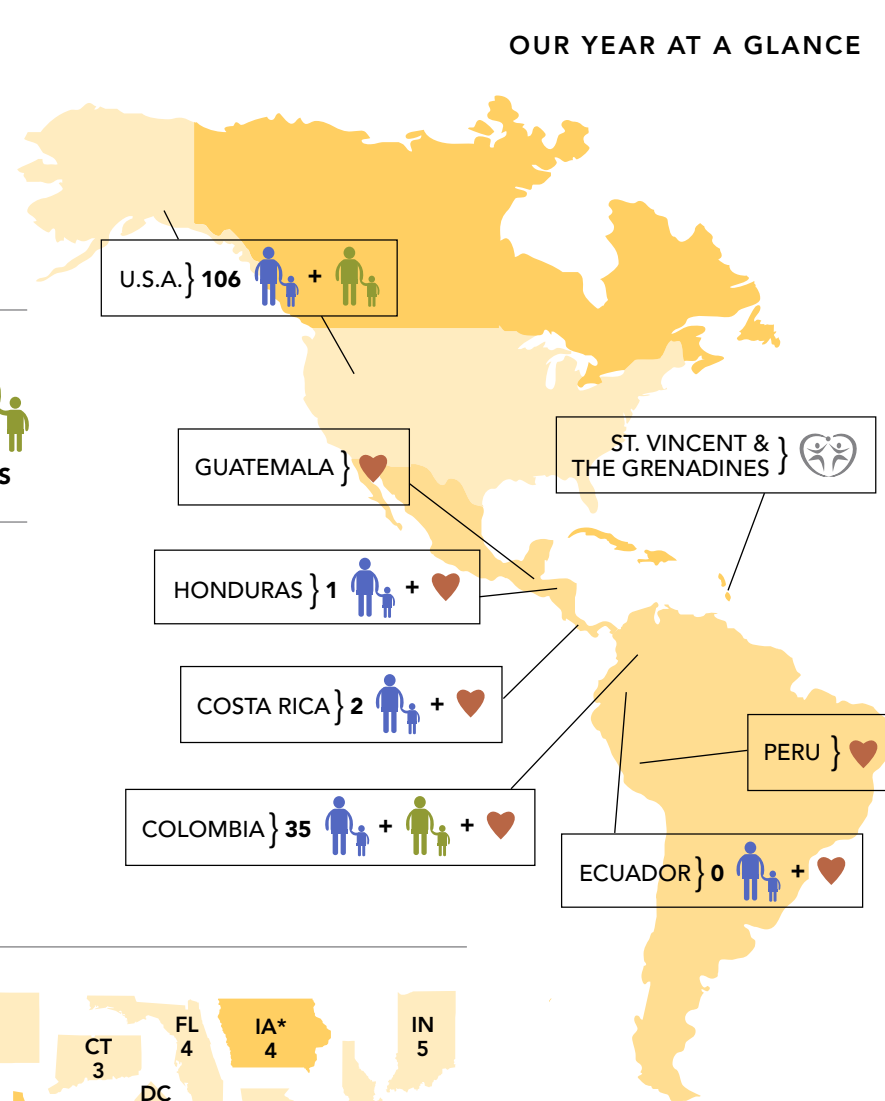
312 children joined their permanent families through Children's Home & LSS adoption programs in Fiscal Year 2013.



New International Adoption programs in Children's Home & LSS partnership.

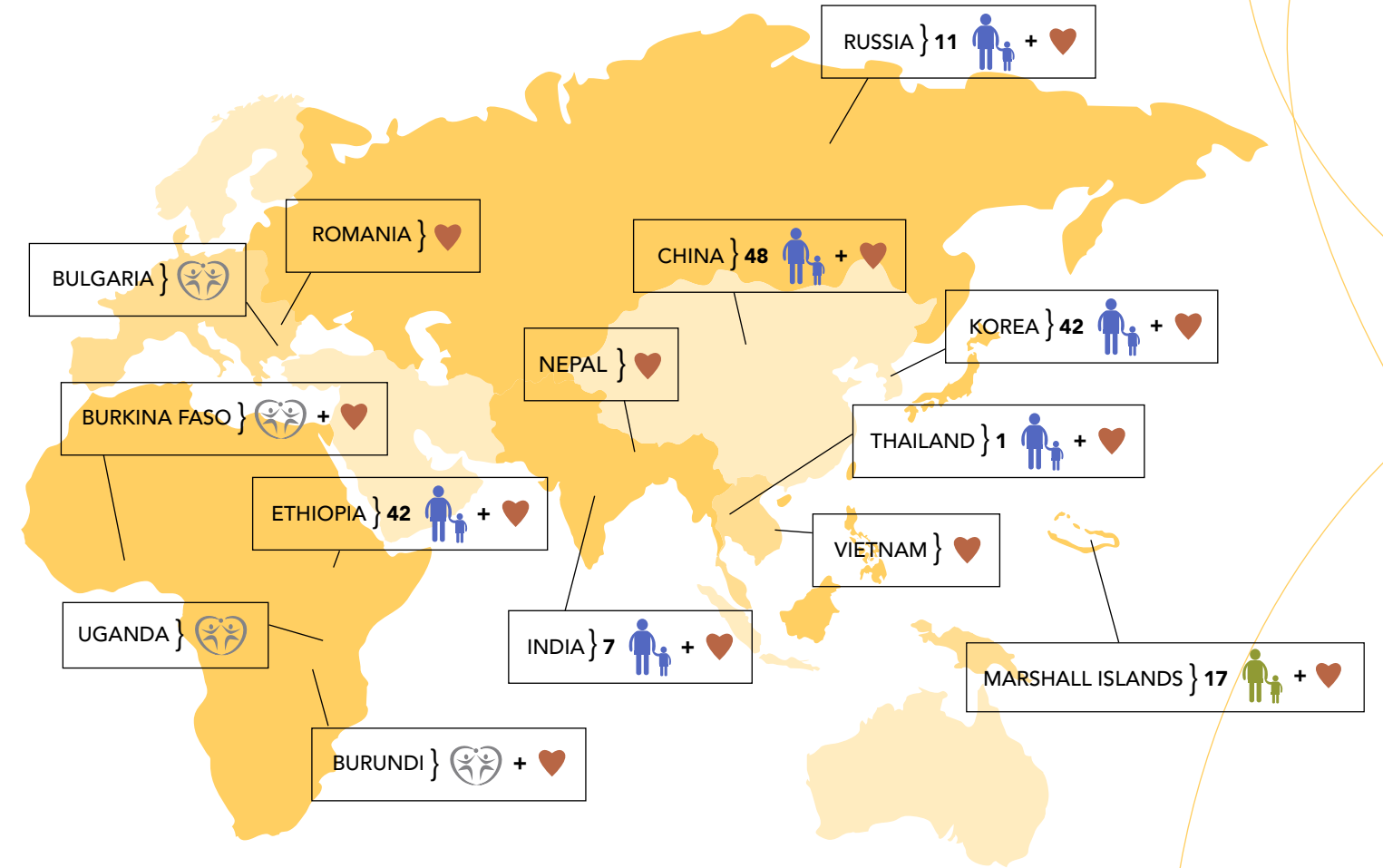


Global Support efforts promote the well being of vulnerable children in these countries.



Number of FY2013 adoptive families by state

*areas of direct service



STRONGER TOGETHER

Fiscal Year 2013 marked the first year of a new partnership between Children's Home Society of Minnesota and Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota. A partnership that bolsters our standing as a respected leader in adoption. One that expands the reach of our services to children throughout Minnesota, for families all over the nation, and in more countries around the world.

While our relationship with LSS is just beginning, the idea of partnership is not new for Children's Home.

Partnership is stitched into the fabric of our work to unite children with families, today as it has been since our founding in St. Paul, Minn., in 1889.

On the pages that follow, you'll meet committed volunteers and donors, adoptees and parents, staff and board members who weave their time, financial gifts and love together to help children thrive. They're just a few of our partners who—like you—make Children's Home stronger by coming together.

ADOPTION SUPPORT FUND

\$34,765

Adoption Support Fund grants awarded to help families adopt Waiting Children in FY2013

JEN & JUAN SEBASTIAN SIDLEY

"We are both absurdly happy." Jen Sidley and 4-year-old Juan Sebastian became mother and son in April 2013.

"I couldn't believe he had not been adopted already." Jen remembers reading the referral: A shy, calm boy living with a caring foster family in Colombia, Juan Sebastian was responding well to treatment for a chronic medical condition. "I was always open to adopting a child with special needs," she says.

Jen received a grant from our Adoption Support Fund to help defray adoption expenses and bring Juan Sebastian home to Virginia. For waiting children—often older children, sibling groups and children with medical special needs—the Adoption Support Fund can be the difference between growing up in an orphanage or foster care and spending a lifetime in a loving family.

"There are times when he misses Colombia and his foster mother, but I love that he is able to tell me stories and draw pictures of that time in his life." In an unexpected turn, Juan Sebastian's medical diagnosis turned out to be *false*—doctors were able to confirm that beyond all doubt—and he is a healthy, active little boy.

"I can look back on my whole life, and Juan Sebastian's, and see how it was leading up to having this specific family at this specific time," Jen says. "I spent so much time crying and praying for the adoption process to proceed, for me to have peace, and mostly for Juan Sebastian to be cared for. But that is exactly what needed to happen to get to this happy ending."

"I AM
IN LOVE
FOR THE
FIRST TIME
IN MY
LIFE."

RANDY & MARCY BETCHER

Randy and Marcy Betcher were moved to support Children's Home from that first adoption information meeting on a cold January day in 1997. Over lunch at a nearby café, they struck up a conversation with another couple who told the Betchers they planned to take out a second mortgage on their home and borrow money from family members to finance their adoption.

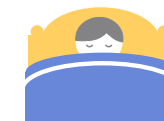
"You could tell how much they wanted a family—and it was a tremendous sacrifice," Randy says. "To see people willing to take such a risk, to put their possessions on the line to have a family, had a huge impact on me."

That conversation became the impetus for Randy and Marcy to make a financial commitment to Children's Home and create an endowment fund for adoption grants. "If it was simply money standing in the way of fulfilling this dream for a family," he says, "we could contribute to that."

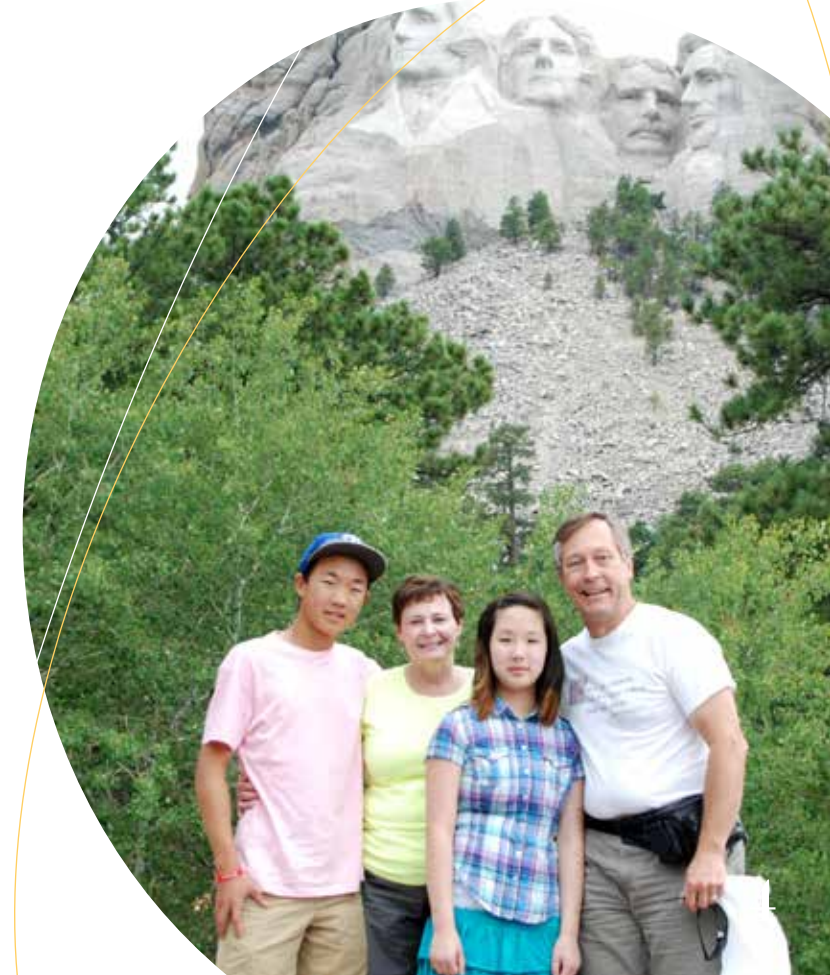
A financial windfall in the market became the seed money for their endowment, to which the Betchers added year by year. Now their endowment and additional gifts to our Adoption Support Fund are making that dream come true for people like Jen Sidley.

Randy and Marcy adopted their son Andrew and daughter Kira from Korea. "We *chose* to have a family. We wanted, we *yearned* to have a family—and there's a different feeling to that," Randy explains. "And if having a family was that important to *us*, we knew that was the same importance other people put on it as well."

16 children adopted this year
with the assistance of
Adoption Support Fund grants
will be tucked into bed tonight
by nurturing parents.



"SEEING HOW
COMMITTED PEOPLE
ARE TO ADOPTING
A CHILD REALLY
PULLED ON
OUR HEARTSTRINGS."



M & M MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

JESSICA ADOLPH

Emma was in junior high when she and Jessica Adolph were matched as mentor and mentee in our M&M Mentorship Program, which pairs adopted youth with adopted adults. "I always enjoyed volunteering and working with kids. I also like that M&M is tied into adoption," Jessica says. She is a Korean adoptee; Emma and her younger sister Zoe are adopted from China. "This program is such a great opportunity. When I was a child, I didn't have anything like it."

Jessica often attended Emma's school performances over the years, so it was fitting that their final outing together before Emma started college last fall was one of Emma's plays. Emma's mom, Beth, recalls their conversation in the parking lot afterwards. "I was feeling sad, Jessica was sad, Emma was sad—the three of us, all feeling this wonderful thing is coming to an end."

"Kind of joking, kind of serious, I said, 'I don't suppose Zoe would want to have me as a mentor?'" Jessica remembers.

Beth was thrilled and relieved, "I had it in the back of my mind, 'wouldn't it be great if Jessica would continue and become Zoe's mentor, too?'" Now Jessica and Zoe are building a bond of their own.

"It has been such a great experience, spending time with Emma as she got older," Jessica says. Getting to know both girls as individuals means a lot to Jessica. "What I've learned from them is that they're so comfortable being themselves at such a young age. As adults, we get bogged down with life and lose our natural inquisitiveness."

"It's a unique situation," Jessica offers. "I'm not a parent, not a teacher, I get to be a different kind of adult in their lives. I hope that I'm able to be a positive role model."

"IT'S BEING ABLE
TO BUILD AND FOSTER
RELATIONSHIPS
WITH EACH OTHER."

Our Post-Adoption Services
build community and
support families
throughout their journey.



"SOMEONE TO
TALK TO,
SOMEONE TO
LISTEN AND
SOMEONE
WHO WOULDN'T
JUDGE ME."

"When I was around Jessica, I didn't have to pretend to be anything I wasn't, and I didn't have to fake anything. I was just me, and she liked that I was just me."

With Emma now in college, Jessica has remained close to the family as Zoe's mentor. "M&M is about having fun and doing things you enjoy," Zoe says, like going to the zoo and playing mini-golf with Jessica. "We also recently went to the Humane Society, because I love spending time with animals."

"It's been very subtle, the way Jessica and my daughters relate to one another," Beth notes. "It's not that they have overt conversations about being an Asian woman in the world. They just see who Jessica is as a person, moving through life and work and society as an Asian woman."

"In my experience," Emma says, "M&M and Jessica are two things that I will never forget and never regret."

EMMA & ZOE SAX

"We really felt it would be helpful for Emma to have a constant, young Asian woman as a role model in her life," Emma's mother, Beth, explains. "It's a piece we just couldn't offer as parents." Emma Sax, now 18, and her sister Zoe, 12, were adopted through Children's Home.

That guidance came quietly in time Jessica and Emma spent together over several years, whether ice skating or rock climbing with other M&M participants, or simply taking a walk together and getting ice cream.

"Jessica gave me advice, let me talk about what was happening in my life, and listened," Emma says.



POST-ADOPTION
HELPLINE INQUIRIES
ANSWERED ANNUALLY



MENTORS AND MENTEEES
MATCHED IN THE
M&M MENTORSHIP PROGRAM



KIDS ATTENDED
ADOPTION DAY CAMP



ENTRIES IN OUR
ADOPTION PHOTO CONTEST



MINNESOTA'S WAITING CHILDREN

“... WE DECIDED
WE COULD DO IT.”

THE VANDEN BOSH FAMILY

There have been moments when new parents Sarah and Mark Vanden Bosh wondered if maybe they didn't know what they were doing: adopting three siblings from foster care, becoming a family of five, navigating life as a transracial family.

But Sarah and Mark *knew* what they were doing. “I taught middle school and high school—this is my comfort zone,” Sarah explains. Their Minneapolis home was a haven for young people. “Neighborhood kids would hang out at our house, kids who probably didn't have the best lives. I said, ‘See, Mark? We could do this.’”

“Most people wouldn't adopt three children,” Sarah says. “They don't have the space in their lives for three, and we decided we could do it.” Diaja, age 7, her sister Denyia, 12, and their brother Dennis, 14, joined the Vanden Bosh family in May 2013.

“There is dancing and singing and joking going on in our house at all times,” Sarah reports. “All three kids love performing, and Dennis plays basketball, too.” The five

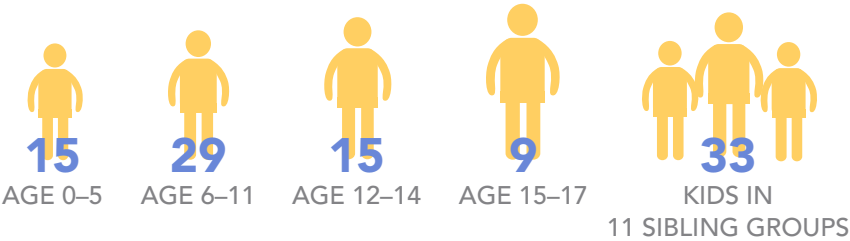
of them recently celebrated their first Christmas together and they're looking forward to summer days swimming at the lake where Mark's family has a cabin.

The delicate partnership burgeoning between children and parents in this newly formed family is growing stronger. “Dennis was on board since Day One. He was definitely ready to have parents,” Sarah says, acknowledging that the adjustment is more difficult for her daughters. “It's hard for kids to realize that no matter what you do, whatever kind of tantrum, or how you do in school, or birth family situation—we're in it to win it. It takes the kids a while to know that family is family.”

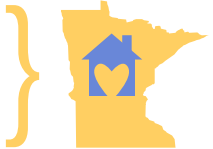
Sarah and Mark know what they are doing. They are committed to their children and to creating a nurturing home where Diaja, Denyia and Dennis can grow up together. “It's super hard at first, but when you become a family, when you love them,” Sarah says, “then I would *never* choose that they *not* have parents.”

68

CHILDREN RECEIVED PLACEMENT SERVICES
OR ENGAGED IN OUR CHILD SPECIFIC
RECRUITMENT PROGRAM, WHERE YOUTH
TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN IDENTIFYING THE
ADOPTIVE FAMILY THAT'S RIGHT FOR THEM.



48 kids found safe,
permanent homes
with nurturing families
in FY2013.



“FAMILY IS FAMILY.”

GLOBAL SUPPORT

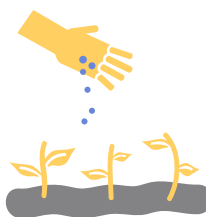
WITH OUR WORLDWIDE PARTNERS,
WE ARE SUPPORTING EFFORTS
THAT PROMOTE THE CARE,
PROTECTION, HEALTH AND EDUCATION
OF CHILDREN IN 18 COUNTRIES.

GUATEMALA | ORPHANAGE SUPPORT

Although our international adoption program with Guatemala has ceased, families who adopted their children from Guatemala continue to express a desire to support orphanages and children in the country that is close to their heart.

Today these caring friends are providing financial support for Guatemala's Hogar del Niño orphanage in Mixco for 180 boys ages 3–13, and for Hogar Madre Anna Vitello in Sumpango, home to children affected by HIV. With limited resources, these orphanages rely on contributions made through Children's Home to assist with the children's medical care and medication; diapers, food and school uniforms; and orphanage repairs.

A \$156 microloan
plants the seeds to
grow a thriving business,
build a stable home and
raise a healthy family.



INDIA | SCHOOL BUS PROJECT

When 5-year-olds Krishnamma and Sivaganga wait to board the school bus every morning, everyone in their village comes to see them off. These two boys are doing what their parents and grandparents could not—attend school. Children's Home pledged to help Rural India Self-Development Trust purchase a school bus, and our generous donors stepped up to contribute \$12,000 toward the project.

Now 20 more children—most of them the first in their families to receive an education—are able to attend school because they have safe, reliable transportation to carry them some 23 miles between their remote villages and the school in the state of Andhra Pradesh. The bus will make it possible for hundreds of children to be educated in the years to come, bringing the gift of hope and opportunity to their entire communities.

1 School Bus + 20 Children =

HOPE FOR A COMMUNITY



ETHIOPIA | WOMEN'S SELF-HELP GROUPS

A loan of \$156 can be life-changing in Ethiopia, where family preservation is a focus of our work. 240 women in the towns of Hossana and Mudula have gained a close-knit community of support and the tools to provide financially for their families as participants in Self-Help Groups.

Financial gifts from our donors made it possible to establish and provide training for 20 Self-Help Groups. Each group cooperatively saves and lends money to its individual members. Last year, the groups saved between \$550 and \$1,460. Microloans of up to 3,000 Ethiopian birr—about \$156 U.S.—are available to group members whose proposed business plans are approved by the other women in their Self-Help Group.

Women use these loans to start or grow a business. The increased income helps a family send children to school, obtain medical care, provide more nutritious and consistent meals—and ultimately create long-term financial stability that enables a family to remain intact.





LINDA KUHLMANN

In a sunny corner of our St. Paul office, Linda Kuhlmann quietly goes about a job that she loves. For 25 years she has done the historical research and detective work that reconnects adoptees and birth parents.

As a post-adoption search caseworker for domestic adoption, Linda's interest in genealogy has become her life's work. "I get to do my hobby every day and I just love it," she says. "It's so rewarding to know that I've been able to fill in the missing pieces for people."

Children's Home is woven into generations of Linda's own family. Her great-grandparents served as foster parents for children who would be adopted through Children's Home. As a boy, her father hitched rides on the milkman's horse-drawn wagon, tagging along on a route up Como Avenue in St. Paul that included a stop (and often a snack) at the Children's Home orphanage. And as a social worker at another agency early in her career, Linda brought babies to doctor appointments at the Children's Home clinic before they were placed for adoption.

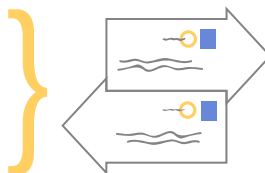
POST-ADOPTION SEARCH SERVICES

"YOU WERE NEVER FORGOTTEN."

Linda keeps a count of the number of family members she has located in her search work since taking the job at Children's Home in 1989. She's not even sure why she started keeping track in the first place. Although quick to retrieve it, she is hesitant, almost self-effacing, to see the figure published. It is remarkable: 1,378 people.

"I find most of them," Linda confirms, including members of Peter Ramme's birth family. "I keep files open for a long time," hoping to locate someone or at least add details for her clients. "I always say to an adopted person, 'You were never forgotten.' A lot of people feel they were forgotten, but I have never spoken to a birthmother who forgot that she had a child."

250 individuals received assistance in their search for birth family members and background information in FY2013.



PETER RAMME

"I always knew I was adopted," says Children's Home board member Peter Ramme, "but there was really no push to find birth families then. I don't even know how my parents would have felt about it in the '50s or '60s." Peter and his sister were both adopted through Children's Home. Their father also served on our board of directors.

"While going through my dad's stuff as he was aging, I found more detailed background information on my birth parents, and a social worker's report typed up on carbon paper," he remembers. "Out of the blue finding something like that—it was quite emotional for me and my family. Adoption became more of a topic in our family after that."

Peter was winding down his professional career and looking to do good works beyond business when his daughter invited him to join her on a Children's Home trip to Ethiopia. That experience inspired him to become more deeply involved, first as a volunteer on our International Child Welfare committee, and now on our board of directors.

The Ethiopia trip also encouraged Peter's daughter and son-in-law to adopt a daughter from Russia, and led Peter to search for his birth family. Working with Linda Kuhlmann, he met six of his half siblings. "Having a granddaughter that was adopted and meeting my half siblings were rewarding and life-changing experiences," he says.

Four generations of Peter Ramme's family have been touched by adoption and Children's Home. "I want to serve and to give financially to Children's Home because I want the mission of adoption to continue. I want families who want to adopt to be able to have a child. I want children who would otherwise not have a family, to have a family."

"THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO ME IS FOR THE MISSION OF ADOPTION TO CONTINUE."



THANK YOU, DONORS!

Children’s Home Society of Minnesota extends our gratitude to all contributors for investing in the lives of children through your generous financial gifts. We honor your extraordinary commitment as partners in our mission to help children thrive.

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Dear Friends,

“You’ve got to pull together to create something exponentially better than what oneself can,” Randy Betcher told us. We think that Randy, an adoptive parent and contributor featured in our Annual Report, perfectly captures what it means to be “stronger together” and why the theme of partnership resonated through Children’s Home during Fiscal Year 2013.

Your partnership with Children’s Home in all of its forms—your financial gifts as a donor or funder, your time and talents as a volunteer, your love and commitment as a family member and friend—is a priceless investment in the futures of hundreds of children. Your support has been vital to the progress we made last year.

Fiscal Year 2013 marked a crucial turning point in our work. Children’s Home entered a management agreement with Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota as the year began. Together, Children’s Home and LSS are setting the standard for excellence as one of the nation’s leading providers of ethical, high-quality, comprehensive adoption services. Already this partnership is renewing our financial stability and producing greater operational efficiencies.

Your contributions to Children’s Home make it possible—and the impact of your generosity is life changing. For a child who will celebrate his birthday with a family. For a child being safely tucked into her bed tonight by a nurturing parent. For all of the children who joined their forever families this year, your gift truly matters.

Adoption has been the heart of our mission since our founding in 1889. Your commitment to the belief that every child deserves to grow and thrive in a loving family is the reason why Children’s Home will celebrate 125 years of serving our community in 2014. Thank you—we are grateful for your trust and honored to be the steward of your gifts. With your abiding partnership, we will continue to build on the momentum we’ve created and become even stronger, together.

With gratitude,


Jodi Harpstead
Chief Executive Officer


Jennifer Martin
Board Chair

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Children's Home Society of Minnesota is committed to help children thrive, and to build, strengthen and sustain individual, family and community life.

Our Core Purpose

Founded in 1889, Children's Home Society of Minnesota knows that a child in a safe, nurturing home is a child who thrives. We work to give every child security, opportunity and a loving family.



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