

PEAR

Parents for Ethical Adoption Reform

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Biographies

Karen Holt: Karen is a single mother living in Central Ohio with her two children from Russia: an 8-year-old adopted as an infant, and a 6-year-old adopted at 36 months. She has a BS from Ohio State University and runs her own financial business. Karen has contributed to several adoption books and magazines and is the owner of www.karensadoptionlinks.com. She has a special interest in open international adoptions. She is an active volunteer for Eastern European Adoption Coalition and Families for Russian & Ukrainian Adoption, Including Neighboring Countries.

Kim Kennedy: Kim comes to the board with many years of experience as an advocate for adoption reform. She and her husband have adopted internationally and know both the joys of successful adoption and the tragedy of adoption scams. They have a special interest in open adoptions and adopting children with special needs and are particularly concerned about the lack of regulation for adoption service providers as well as the illegal procurement of children for adoption. Kim has an undergraduate degree in Psychology and Sociology from Hope College and a Master's degree in Urban Planning from the University of Michigan. Prior to becoming a stay-at-home mom she taught middle school and worked in community development. Kim has volunteered with non-profit organizations dedicated to improving adoption practices, spoken publicly on ethics in adoption, written for Adoptive Families magazine, facilitated adoption support groups, and volunteered with her local foster care agency.

David Kruchkow: David's family was one of 22 families victimized in an illegal Mexican adoption/baby smuggling scheme that made international headlines in May 1999. Those involved in the placement of his daughter intentionally stole her true identity when they altered it for adoption. After the Mexican attorney and the New York consultants involved in his case were convicted and sentenced to federal prison, he went public with his story and created his well known website, www.adoptionagencychecklist.com, with the hopes of helping others avoid falling victim to adoption fraud. His site opened the doors for others to come forward and tell their stories. He has been advocating for ethical adoption reform for a decade. His adoptive daughter will turn 13 in 2009. David earned his undergraduate degree in Anthropology and after a 23-year career in sales and management, turned his skills and experience to teaching. He currently teaches high school science in Florida.

Barbara J. McArtney: Barbara is an adoptee and the mother of seven, including two internationally adopted children with special needs. She is an attorney who has practiced law for 25 years. Barbara is currently the director of Graham's Gift Children's Foundation, a NYS-authorized adoption agency and applicant for Hague accreditation. Graham's Gift conducts NY State home studies, and assists families adopting independently as well as those troubleshooting problematic adoptions. Barbara has worked as a custody and visitation mediator and is a member of the New York State Law Guardian Panel representing children in family court. She also has worked as an advocate in rape and domestic violence cases, and as an Assistant District Attorney. Barbara has spoken at and submitted materials to the Hague Regulatory meetings, adoption support groups, public schools, colleges and universities including SUNY Law, and recently at the Ethica and Evan B. Donaldson Ethics Conference. Barbara is a supporter of adoption reform.

Karen Moline: Karen is a single mom to a wonderful boy from Da Nang, Vietnam, adopted in August 2001 at the age of 6 months. She is the author of two novels; over a dozen nonfiction books; and hundreds of articles for publications in the US, UK, and Australia. Ever since her first agency shut its Vietnam program with no warning (due to corruption), Karen has been tracking the pervasive nature not only of corruption in-country, but of the sense of entitlement and desperation that fuels many adoptions, leading prospective parents to make terrible choices that perpetuate unethical behavior. Karen believes that until there are mandated standards better regulating adoption agencies, educating prospective parents, and ensuring that trafficking cease, international adoption will continue to be fraught with corruption.

Gina Pollock: Gina is currently a stay-at-home mother of three children, one adopted internationally from Lithuania in 2006. She has an undergraduate degree in psychology and earned her juris doctorate from the Dickinson School of Law in 1988. In addition to practicing law, Gina has taught special needs children in the Lancaster County school systems and middle school/junior high in the Catholic school system. Gina is a founding member of LAPAS, Lithuanian Adoptive Parents Association. She serves as moderator for numerous online adoption support groups, and is the Internet and Orphanage Support Chairperson for FRUA-PA. Gina is a strong advocate for adoption education and reform, and has been appointed as the President of PEAR.

Margaret Weeks: Margaret is the single mother of two wonderful girls from Vietnam. Her older daughter was adopted in December, 1999, and her youngest daughter was adopted in December, 2006. Most of her professional life has been spent in education, grade school through high school. Margaret currently works for the University of Virginia, Darden Graduate School of Business as a communications and marketing manager. Margaret was a staunch supporter of her agency until she learned of unethical practices occurring in Vietnam and notified the agency--which chose to do nothing. As an educator, Margaret is most interested in the educational potential for prospective adoptive parents and adoptive families, particularly when it comes to educating families about ethical adoptions and how to make ethical choices throughout the adoption process. Margaret has served as president of a local adoption support group with numerous duties, including public speaking and adoption advocacy, adoption education, and counseling families considering adoption.