

**PLAYGROUNDS** is a  
newsletter from  
Hopscotch Adoptions, Inc.

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## CONCURRENT ADOPTIONS - TWICE THE FUN?

A PERSONAL STORY SHARED BY VIVIANE MARTINI, HOPSCOTCH ADOPTIONS CLIENT

When my husband Craig and I signed on with Hopscotch in February 2009, we planned to adopt two children, our firsts, from **Bulgaria**. We submitted our dossier and as the dust settled from the paper chase, we began to realize that the wait for two referrals, especially with our child parameters, would be very long. The more I researched and followed the pace of referrals issued in Sofia, the more disheartened I became about the years of waiting ahead. So I began looking for our children on waiting children's websites. On March 27, 2010 I came across a brief profile of a little boy who was listed with, who else, Hopscotch. My initial inquiry was answered only with the news that he was not in Bulgaria, but a few days later I was sent a lot of information about this child. I randomly opened one of the emails and fell immediately in love with the little boy I saw in the photo. I had chills and a pounding heart and sweaty palms all at once...

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Hopscotch Adoptions is a Hague Accredited Agency by the Council on Accreditation and is a member of the Joint Council on International Children's Services.



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## ETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Hopscotch Families,

We hope your summer days have been restful or lazy, just how you had hoped to be spending your summer this year. Hopscotch **staff** and **board** have been very busy with our Hague Accreditation by the Council on Accreditation's self study and site review. Hopscotch successfully completed this in April and on the heels of that, we just successfully completed our North Carolina re-licensing application and site visit. The preparation was all consuming and we would like to thank each of you that volunteered to be available for interviews and all of the support you lent to us throughout the often arduous and time consuming process. We really appreciate everyone's incredible patience, understanding and encouragement while undergoing both of these evaluations. The reviews from both evaluators were outstanding and wholly validated that Hopscotch is poised to continue to grow and serve more children.

This past month, our staff participated in **Adoption Learning Partners** webinar titled "**Brothers And Sisters in Adoption: A Lunchtime Discussion With the Experts**". It was thought provoking and touched on traditional practices of bringing children into a family with children already rooted within the family unit. Some practices and beliefs were reiterated with their importance and some challenged traditional practices in preparation and attachment within the family. We encourage you to continue your education beyond what is required of you to further enhance your family's success.

Thanks to each of you that continue to participate in post adoption reporting and to those that have gone the extra mile and continue to send us updates and photos. They are cherished and lift us each day when we see the children growing and thriving in their forever family. In addition, many of you know through the news media, countries are placing an unprecedented importance on post adoption reporting. Without your cooperation, a child's future to have a permanent family is at great risk. We love to hear from you!

Warmest regards always,

Robin E. Sizemore, Executive Director  
Hopscotch Adoptions, Inc | Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Ghana and Morocco

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## ROGRAM STATS

### ARMENIA

Stats: In 2011, Hopscotch helped place 15 children (14 boys and 1 girl) from Armenia with their forever families. So far in 2012, 8 children have come home from Armenia (7 girls and 1 boy). There are currently 4 officially matched children with families (3 girls and 1 boy). There are also 10 unofficially matched children with families (6 girls and 4 boys).

### BULGARIA

Stats: In 2011, Hopscotch helped place 2 children (2 girls) from Bulgaria with their forever families. So far in 2012, one girl has come home from Bulgaria. There are currently 10 unofficially matched children with families (7 girls and 3 boys).

### GEORGIA

Stats: In 2011, Hopscotch did not place any children from Georgia. So far in 2012, there are currently 4 children officially matched with families (3 girls and 1 boy).

### GHANA

Stats: In 2011, Hopscotch helped place 9 children (6 girls and 3 boys) from Ghana with their forever families. So far in 2012, 8 children have come home from Ghana (4 girls and 4 boys). There are currently 8 officially matched children (5 girls and 3 boys) with families.

### MOROCCO

Stats: In 2011, Hopscotch helped place 10 children (2 girls and 8 boys) from Morocco with their forever families. So far in 2012, 10 children have come home from Morocco (1 girl and 9 boys).



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## WICE THE FUN (cont'd from Page 1)

Of course, Craig and I could not decide to adopt Karen, now Rex, in a split second. We spent several weeks discussing his special needs which were beyond the parameters we had previously established. An IA doctor reviewed Rex's information and gave us a grim prognosis. We also had to think long and hard about how to finance a second from scratch adoption. We crunched the numbers like crazy. In the end, we both felt that Rex was meant to be ours and that we could not leave him behind. I was ready to move heaven and earth for this child.

In November 2010, after many delays in assembling our new dossier, we finally traveled to meet Rex in **Yerevan**. I will simply never forget the moment his caregiver placed him into my arms and he looked up at me inquisitively with his big brown eyes while tears streamed down my face. We had a magical week with Rex, then returned home, expecting to pick him up about four months later. Four months turned into eight as our hearts were breaking with every passing day without our son, but there was one unbelievable, unexpected ray of light: the referral of a little girl from **Bulgaria**.

When we decided to adopt Rex, we were sure of one thing: we would have him home for about a year before we would ever be matched in Bulgaria. In October 2010, we updated our paperwork with MOJ in Sofia and requested one girl only. We also expanded our special needs parameters based on how much we had learned in this regard over the past 18 months. I could hardly believe it when on Valentine's Day 2011, exactly two years to the day from when we applied to Hopscotch, I got the call saying we had a referral. What? Yes, no, joy, shock, worry, confusion, elation, disbelief! Now what? We simply had not prepared ourselves for the adoption of two children from two different countries in the same year, but once again, we decided to move forward and accepted our daughter's referral which started a crazy seven months for us filled with three trips overseas, two court dates, two adjusting toddlers, countless medical appointments, lots of legal tasks, and so on.

In hindsight, I don't quite know how we survived our two concurrent adoptions. I don't know how we managed to get the money together, to have all the paperwork ready when due, to travel with a week's notice to faraway lands, to meet our son's needs while preparing for his sister's arrival, to endure the frustrations and sadness over bureaucratic red tape, to remain happy and hopeful and joyous almost every day. To be honest, I don't recommend concurrent adoptions. They are certainly not for the faint of heart nor for the disorganized and the procrastinators nor for perfectionists and control freaks. I do, however, most sincerely encourage you to follow your heart and if that means adopting two children from different countries at the same time, so be it. My children are amazing little survivors, resilient and joyful, seizing the days now as beloved members of our family. Both of them have significant medical and developmental needs and to many an eye they may appear permanently flawed. For Craig and me though they are pure bliss, matched wonderfully to us and each other, created perfectly, and meant to become ours forever through an adoption journey stranger than fiction that neither of us could have fathomed when it began. ■

If you would like to share something special about your adoption journey in one of our future newsletter issues please contact **Michelle Moreau**.



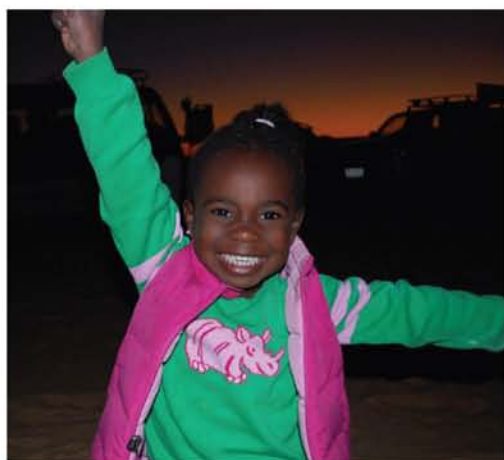


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## Y NEEDS...OR THEIR NEEDS?

A PERSONAL STORY SHARED BY KRISTIN DADEY, HOPSCOTCH ADOPTIONS CLIENT

It was May 22, 2010 when my husband Sean and I received the news from Hopscotch--that there was a gorgeous little two year old girl called Hermina ("Mimi" as she was known) and she was in need of permanent family. That was it... we didn't need any time to think about the match--we immediately said yes. Of course everything changes when you see an actual picture of the little child that is about to become your daughter. It's just like seeing a sonogram for the first time. The whole adoption process is no longer just a "process" but instead something that is real, something magical, something tangible. We found ourselves looking at Mimi's picture every day, absorbing every inch of her, wondering what her personality was like, what made her laugh, what made her cry, what she ate, when she slept- we often wondered who was taking care of her. Our entire family could hardly wait until she was actually with us.



Sean and I went to **Ghana** in September 2010 for the court hearing. We knew that was the first of two trips--the first to have the Ghanaian government agree to custody, and then the second, to go for the visa interview with the US government that would ultimately result in Mimi getting a visa to enter the US as an American citizen and as our child. For anyone who is going through this process, one knows how exciting, yet uncertain and stressful the process can be. In September, we received a court order that allowed us to take custody of Mimi. At that time, we had a choice to make--do we take Mimi back to the hotel with us or do we wait until we received the visa from the US Government--knowing that process could take a very long time. As much as Mimi was part of our family from the moment we saw her picture, we decided it was ultimately better for her not to take actual custody of her until we had the visa in our hands from the US government. What if by some small improbable chance the US government denied the visa?? Sean and I knew we were only going to be in Ghana for a week and then, we had no guarantee when the US government would finish their part and actually issue the visa (it took them another five months to do). We couldn't stay in the country until they did issue the visa because of work and because of our other three children waiting for us at home. Ultimately, Sean and I decided not to take custody of Mimi and bring her back to the hotel room with us for one simple reason--it was not in Mimi's best interest. How cruel and confusing would it have been for her to come and live in a hotel with us for a week, going swimming, be fed extremely well, be exposed to all sorts of love and play, start to trust us, only to then turn around and leave her back at the orphanage a few days later? Had we decided to keep her-- I am sure it would have had a negative impact on the overall attachment process.



When we first actually met Mimi, she was already two years old, so she had stranger anxiety. I remember her looking at us with such doubt and suspicion. It was not the happy union one might initially imagine. Instead, as is completely normal for two years old when they meet a stranger, she was wary of us and had no reason to think we were there to stay. Had we actually taken her and then left her again--there would have been no reason for her to think we were actually serious the second time we came back. Kids have amazing memories and they would remember that you left them the first time. Ultimately, we wanted her to trust us and taking her for a week and then leaving her would only destroy any trust we were building. So, instead, we visited her every day, including at the orphanage, hoping she would get to know us a little and have a nice memory of two people who played with her and who loved her. After that first week, we left her with a photo album of our family and some toys to remember us by. She had warmed up to us but she wasn't traumatized when we left. One could impinge how hard it would have been had she stayed with us for a week. We let her know that we would be back. We wanted the first time we met to be fun, exciting and not confusing. We thought that was a better foundation for forming a permanent attachment to us. ■





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ELCOME HOME!!!

Hopscotch would like to celebrate some of the children that have come home in the last 12 months!





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## OU SAID IT...WE HEARD IT!

Feedback from our quality service survey indicated that you valued Hopscotch's physical presence more often in our **program** countries. We couldn't agree more. Hopscotch continues to be ever mindful and good financial stewards when it comes to large expenditures. Travel to our country partners can be very expensive and so, we will be returning to Ghana and Morocco this fall to continue to grow our programs and seek out better ways to serve children and families. We will take this time to revisit our partners, orphanages, government ministries and our US embassy consul sections. This will be Michelle Moreau's first trip abroad and I am certain that her incredible care and attention to our clients will only be enhanced through a firsthand experience. We'll be blogging and updating our Facebook page throughout our travel. We hope you will vicariously journey along with us. ■

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## PECIAL NEEDS GRANTS

Hopscotch is pleased to share, through a generous 2008 grant from Family Resources; we have been able to assist adoptive parents with mini-grants. These mini-grants help offset expenses related to the adoption of children with non-correctable needs. Through this grant, Hopscotch has been able to assist families to adopt over 40 children. The grant is now fully depleted and we wish to extend our gratitude to those that made it possible!!! We are all forever grateful! Once this fund is replenished, Hopscotch will happily return to awarding mini-grants to families adopting children with non-correctable special needs. If you are interested in donating to Hopscotch's Special Needs Grant fund please contact us or [give here](#).



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## ELPFUL RESOURCES

Have you ever wanted to connect with families adopting or who have adopted from the same country as you? Are you a contracted client with Hopscotch Adoptions, Inc.? Join your adoption country's Angels listserve NOW by sending an email to:

ARMENIA  
BULGARIA  
GEORGIA  
GHANA  
MOROCCO  
SINGLE MOMS

[armenianangels-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:armenianangels-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)  
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[HopscotchSingleMoms-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:HopscotchSingleMoms-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)



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## OCIAL MEDIA



Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Hopscotch-Adoptions-Inc/125099974261800>

Be sure to join Hopscotch on our Facebook page where we post real time updates of things happening in all programs. You'll also find posts about educational resources, events, and celebrations. Being a part of our Facebook page is a great way to connect with our agency and other families.



Also, Follow our Blog: <http://hopscotchadoptions.wordpress.com/>

Like Facebook, the Hopscotch Adoptions Blog is a terrific resource for relevant articles and newsworthy events and happenings.



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## EADOPTION: IS IT WORTH IT?

So, the last thing you want to do when you come home with your child is do more paperwork, right? Well, hopefully after this article you might change your mind. Readoption is simply the process of adopting a child again in the United States after being legally adopted in another country. Even if the adoption is considered full and final, readoption is still something to consider. It is not required for those children who came home on a HR3/IR3 visas, unless your state of residence requires you to do so.

Readoption validates the adoption under United States law because not all states recognize the validity of foreign adoption decrees. It will allow your adoption to be recognized by all US states. The readoption process usually generates a state-issued birth certificate for the child. This is a HUGE benefit because if your child ever needs a certified birth certificate (school, programs, college, etc.) you would only have to contact your state's vital records and request a certified copy of your child's birth certificate. If you did not go through the readoption process in your state, you would have to request a certified birth certificate from the country you adopted from. This process also allows you to change your child's name if you wish to do so. ■

Recap of the  
PROS and CONS of  
Readoption

### PROS

Obtain a  
state-issued  
birth  
certificate

Change  
your  
child's  
name

Guarantees  
your child's  
right to  
inheritance

### CONS

Paperwork

Possibility  
of having  
to hire  
a lawyer

Financial  
burden

W

## HAT IS A "BLIND REFERRAL"?

TWO QUOTES FROM FAMILIES WHO WENT THROUGH THE BLIND REFERRAL PROCESS

Adoption is an ever changing process. The amount and type of information provided on a referral has changed considerably over time. There are different types of referrals within each country. Some countries provide a name, date of birth, medical and social information, and even a photo. Other countries provide no information, which is often referred to as a 'blind referral'. Currently in **Armenia** and **Morocco**, the majority of the referrals are "blind". This means the government or orphanage does not provide any information (age, gender, medical) on a referral, only notification that a prospective referral meets your preferences according to your dossier. For a waiting child in Armenia and Morocco, limited information may or may not be available on a case by case basis. Neither Hopscotch, nor our in country partners, have any control over what information is provided on a referral from the government or orphanage. Please know that Hopscotch provides your family with any and all information received from the program you are adopting from.



*"I believe that I was one of the first "blind" referrals and, not knowing this would be the case, expected a photo or video up until the day I flew to Armenia. Not having the slightest idea of what to expect, other than the child's name and "healthy infant girl", I was quite anxious about such a leap of faith. It was love at first sight. That is exactly how I felt when I saw my daughter in the arms of her caregiver. "Is she mine?" I asked in amazement. Having no idea what she looked like, I could not believe such a lovely baby was cosmically meant for me. Even now, I have tears in my eyes remembering the awe and elation I felt upon my first glimpse of this little soul! To hold her in my arms was magical. One thing I do believe, had I not felt that this was the right baby for me, I could have refused the referral without any repercussions. I was never under any type of pressure to register for her. Had I desired visits to other doctors or questioned any health issues, it would have been perfectly fine to seek outside advice. I must add, in all honesty, that I saw other darling babies in the nursery that any family would adore, but I fully bonded with the one who was meant for me. While a blind referral was unexpected and mentally taxing, I had faith in Hopscotch and their team. I had to go with an open mind and heart."*

*"As the date of my Registration trip rapidly approached I realized I wouldn't be receiving any photos or medical information. At first I wasn't too concerned. But a few days before I left the country I got really anxious and wondered if there was a reason why I wasn't getting the information. I got concerned that maybe there was information that was intentionally being withheld from the orphanage (perhaps a serious health concern?). When I inquired about this with Robin and her team, they seemed pretty confident that there was no information being withheld and to let them and the team in Armenia know right away if I had any concerns when I got there. As promised, the referral was a gorgeous healthy baby girl. She was so beautiful I cried when I saw her." ■*





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## F WE HAVEN'T MET BEFORE...

It's time to put a face with an email and voice. At Hopscotch, we are here to answer your questions. No matter who you speak with, we'll make sure you get the answers you need. Below you'll see all of [Hopscotch's staff](#) and our areas of expertise.

**Robin Sizemore, Founder & Executive Director**[robin@hopscotchadoptions.org](mailto:robin@hopscotchadoptions.org)

- Oversees all agency operations and program functions

**Sarah Sheppard, BSW, Director of Clinical Services**[sarah@hopscotchadoptions.org](mailto:sarah@hopscotchadoptions.org)

- [Home Study Services](#)
- Inter-Agency agreements
- USCIS questions
- Waiting Children Profiles

**Michelle Moreau, MSW, Post Placement Coordinator & Program Support**[michelle@hopscotchadoptions.org](mailto:michelle@hopscotchadoptions.org)

- Ghana Program Coordinator
- Post placement and post adoption services
- Article 16 and dossier review
- Coordinates newsletter
- Coordinates service satisfaction survey

**Megan Gardinier, Senior Administrative Assistant**[megan@hopscotchadoptions.org](mailto:megan@hopscotchadoptions.org)

- Application and service agreement intake
- Dossier support
- Mass communications
- The "go-to gal"

**Business Office**[admin@hopscotchadoptions.org](mailto:admin@hopscotchadoptions.org)

- Invoices and Statements
- Financial point of contact

**Heather Taylor, Family Coordinator**[heather@hopscotchadoptions.org](mailto:heather@hopscotchadoptions.org)

- Contracted to handle all family inquiries and initial program questions.



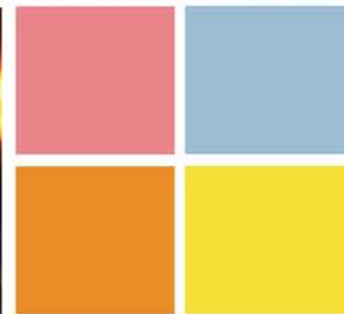
Robin



Sarah



Michelle



Megan



Heather