

MISSION
OF
TEARS

(ONTARIO)

Annual Report
2013

From the Board of Directors

June 1, 2014

I would like to use this opportunity to update you on some significant changes at Mission of TEARS (Ontario) this past year.

Firstly, after being closed to Canadian adoptions for more than two years, the South African program was reopened – in no short part due the efforts of this agency and its Director Gordon Lewis. It has meant that dozens of awaiting families have been able to complete their program and have finally welcomed a new child into their loving family. In fact, in the last year we completed 24 adoptions from South Africa and have many new families enquiring about this program.

Early last year Haiti also reopened its doors to Mission of TEARS (Ontario) after many difficult months following that tragic earthquake. Thousands of families had displaced members or parents who were never found and this overwhelmed local adoption facilities. Government agencies that usually handled such things were also disrupted to such an extent that the adoption community lost its confidence in the accuracy of Haitian record keeping. This meant that adoptive families could not be guaranteed that parents would not re-emerge at a future date requesting custody of their child. But through perseverance Haitian adoptions are again being completed and Mission of TEARS (Ontario) has finalized more than a dozen in the past year.

Sadly, we had to say farewell to a long time MoT member, Elaine Sternall who retired this past spring. Elaine was with the agency for almost 20 years and was a dedicated and valued member of this agency. Many families have Elaine to thank for their adoption and this agency will miss her terribly.

With strong programs at work everyone at Mission of TEARS (Ontario) is optimistic for the coming year and especially so the Board of Directors. With our dedicated staff we can assist many families achieve their dream of adopting a child as feel blessed in having done so for the hundreds of families that have come through our door.

Regards,



Mark McMahon
Chair
Board of Directors

Board of Directors

Board Chair Mark McMahon

Officers Brent Walker
Herbie Kuhn
Tim Bos
Scott Farrell

Agency Staff

Gordon Lewis- *Executive Director*

Gordon is a passionate orator and a selfless crusader for best practice principals for Inter-country Adoptions. A Minister by profession, Gordon launched into humanitarian work and championed the cause of orphaned children in need of families with his wife Diane. Gordon has a strong educational background in Theology and Psychology, and has more than two decades work experience in the field of child welfare and development. With a long history of dedicated effort, Mission of TEARS (Ontario) has placed hundreds of children into caring homes in Canada. As an adoptive parent himself, Gordon is able to empathize with families as he expertly navigates them through their journey toward parenthood. Gordon's educational background and learned experience in child welfare, combined with his personal beliefs have fashioned a successful philosophy for Inter-country adoption. From these factors, the policies and procedures of Mission of TEARS (Ontario) have emerged.

Diane Lewis- *Consultant in Child Placement (Part Time)*

Diane is very committed to the cause of children and her strengths in adoption come from personal experiences as an adoptive mother. Her strong counseling skills and understanding of the process and issues in adoption, pertaining to children and parents, have evolved first hand from working with Gordon. Diane has become more involved over recent years with the management of overseas programs for children left behind in orphanages and never to be adopted. Her skills from her teaching and work with disabled children here in Canada have allowed for development and support for those working with similar children in orphanages overseas.

Penny Jaundoo- *Accounting and Administration*

Penny has been part of the team for almost 10 years and has blessed us with her accurate accounting for each applicant file as well as efficiently managing the day to day accounting and administration for our agency. Her dedication to Mission of TEARS (Ontario) reaches beyond her own duties as she never hesitates to assist the Team with program counseling and program development.

Jocelyn MacDonald- File Manager

Jocelyn graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Toronto, where she majored in African Studies. Jocelyn primarily works with families to assist them in completing their files for overseas submission. Her commitment to helping families through their adoption journey has made her a valued member of the Mission of TEARS (Ontario) Team

Rebecca Gula- Administration and Licensing

Rebecca has a background in both Social Work and Executive Office Administration. She brings organizational and administrative skills to Mission of TEARS (Ontario) that contribute to the daily operations of the office. Rebecca assists in updating the organization's material and works on both domestic and international licenses. Rebecca also assists with new client intake.

The Countries

Mission of TEARS (Ontario) holds a permanent license to facilitate adoptions from the following countries for relative and non-relative applications:

- **Caribbean:** Haiti
- **Africa:** South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana (relative), Kenya

Mission of TEARS (Ontario) also holds a limited license to facilitate adoptions from the following countries for relative and non-relative applications:

- **Africa:** Ethiopia, Eritrea

Child and Program Descriptions

Haiti

Description of Child: 6 months and older possible at time of referral. Due to the lengthy final stages of this program, children could be up to 12 months older at the time of placement. There are an equal number of male and female children in this program. Sibling groups common in this program and range in age. Children from this program cannot be pre identified, and must be resident in a licensed Crèche that has a working agreement with our agency.

Description of the Program: This is a French Language program which requires all documents to be translated before being sent overseas. This program requires two trips overseas.

Kenya

Description of the Child: 12 months to 8 years old at the time of referral. There are more male children in this program and sibling groups are rare.

Description of the Program: This program is unique, as it allows for applicants to become adoptive parents more immediately than most programs. The Kenya program requires a 3-month supervised stay in Kenya by applicants who wish to adopt. Applicants are also required to stay in Kenya during the finalization of the adoption which can be anywhere from 6-9 months. Because of this, Kenya as a program requires you to prepare and plan with the agency well in advance of any travel. Specific training in language and cultural orientation is a requirement. Training is done in both Canada and Kenya in meeting these requirements.

South Africa

Description of the Child: 9 months to 7 years old possible at time of referral. There are an equal number of male and female children in this program, but sibling groups are not common.

Description of the Program: The South African program is not built to accommodate quantity but quality in placements. Prospective parents are expected to be well prepared in adopting from this cross cultural and unique setting. This completely English language program simplifies document preparation and allows a comfortable conclusion to the adoption overseas for parents.

South Africa provides an adoption program different to most other African countries due to its advanced social service system and infrastructure including leading medical facilities. This program only requires one trip overseas.

Ghana

This program is currently not open to accepting new clients. Please check our website <http://www.myadoption.ca> for any new information about this program.

Nigeria

This program is specific to applicants who were born in Nigeria, but now reside in Canada. This program is for both relative and none relative adoptions. For more information, please see our website <http://www.myadoption.ca> or contact our office at (416) 449-0018 ext 101.

Program Statistics

**These figures represent all Canadian Provinces*

Adoption Statistics

Permanent License Countries

	Haiti (Hague*)	Ghana (Non Hague)	South Africa (Hague)	Kenya (Hague)	Nigeria (Non Hague)
Adoptions Finalized Within This Year	12	1	18	-	2
Pending Adoptions (opened this year)	7	-	6	1	-
Pending Adoptions (ongoing from previous years)	12	-	6	3	1

Average Length of Process (From Ministry Approval to Final Adoption Order)	30-38 Months	Case Subjective	25-30 Months	25-30 Months	Case Subjective
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Total Cost	\$39,000	Case Subjective	\$31,000	\$27,550	Case Subjective
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Programs that accept only relative adoption applications have a fee of \$8,000, plus any 3rd party costs.

**As of April 1, 2014*

Program Statistics (*continued*)

Adoption Statistics

	Eritrea (Non Hague)
Adoptions Finalized Within This Year	1
Pending Adoptions (opened this year)	-
Pending Adoptions (ongoing from previous years)	-

Average Length of Process (From Ministry's Approval to Final Adoption Order)	Case Subjective
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Total Cost	Case Subjective
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Note: The amounts mentioned above are an overall cost estimate for your international adoption. Included in these figures are the fees paid to the agency, overseas service fees (please review our overseas services on our website for details). These figures do not include airfare costs or any travel and accommodation costs during your stay.

Note: Hague Treaty countries can require the longest waiting time. The policy of the Agency regarding timelines given for any adoption is that they are not presented as exact and are subject to change due to circumstances beyond the Agency's control.

Complaint Procedure

If a complaint is not resolved at the agency level, the applicant will need to follow this process:

1. Email the Board of Directors at **board@missionoftears.com** stating that a complaint is being formally sent to their attention.
2. A response that the email has been received will be sent from the Board of Directors.
3. The formal complaint must be in letter format from both applicants (where applicable), it must contain further detail, and it must be signed by both applicants. (not by email)
4. The complaint will then be reviewed at the next scheduled board meeting and a written response will be provided.