

**Annual Report 2015**  
*Family by Adoption Inc.*

## Report from the Chair of the Board of Directors

July 1, 2015

With another year under our belts, it should surprise no one that there has been no shortage of changes and developments in the world of international adoption to report.

Firstly, with the South African program back up and accepting families Mission of TEARS (Ontario) has been running flat out completing family files that were caught up in the program's hiatus. We have begun accepting new files for South Africa and it remains our most sought after country for adoption.

We continue to work through the backlog of families who are awaiting a beautiful child from Ethiopia. Mission of TEARS (Ontario) recognized the strain on the hundreds of families that were caught out when Imagine Adoption closed their doors and has been diligently working to complete these adoptions at its own expense. There remain a few dozen families in the queue and we hope to complete these forever families in the coming year. Good news also exists on the Haitian front as our adoption program in that country restarted last year as is now running seamlessly. Our expectations at this stage are for a handful to be completed in the coming year but are optimistic that we can complete more over time.

Mission of TEARS (Ontario) is also working with Guyanese officials to obtain a license to complete adoptions from this South American country. For families it will mean a shorter flight, less cost and less time away when adopting from here resulting in what we hope will be a very popular program in the future.

Administratively, I would like to confirm that as Chair, I can state the following:

- The Board has reviewed and accepted the audited financial statements
- The Board has reviewed and approved the report by agency staff on the operations of our programs in each country
- The Board has followed its pre-determined process insofar as goals and performance measures in evaluating the performance of the Executive Director
- All Board members have been provided with an orientation package that includes material outlining its roles, responsibilities and liabilities as a Board member

This past year has been no less busy within the agency. Beginning in January Sharon Gollert joined us on a full time basis and will be assuming the role and duties of the Executive Director on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015. Sharon has many years of experience in the area of adoption – domestic and international, most recently from the Government of Ontario. And as always, none of this effort comes about without the hard work and endless patience of our staff. Penny Jaundoo, Jocelyn MacDonald and Rebecca O'Hagan have put in countless hours to ensure our files are in order and acceptable to all levels of government, domestic and overseas. Without their diligence and attention to detail we would not be able to complete as many adoptions that we do without complaint or delay. On behalf of the Board I wish to thank these three for sharing their days with us.

Finally, Gordon Lewis, the founder and outgoing ED of Mission of TEARS (Ontario), has retired from an active role at the agency but has agreed to stay on as a consultant and will join the Board of Directors providing us with his experience and guidance for years to come. Gordon began this agency over 20 years ago while responding to a crisis in Russian society. With the collapse of the socialist system in the early nineties Gordon was approached by Russian friends to find "a family or two" to help ease the crisis that was unfolding within the Soviet system. Gordon returned to Canada to establish Mission of TEARS (Ontario) and pioneered international adoption in Canada. Through the years he has been sought out as an expert in the field and interviewed many times for newspaper and television articles on the topic. Government officials regularly call Gordon and ask for his insight on matters relating to The Hague Convention and how their decisions could affect orphaned children and Canadian families.

The Board would like to thank Gordon for his many years of service to this agency and to the hundreds of families he has counseled through the years. To reflect this change at the agency and to signal a new era in Canadian international adoption we have also changed our name to Families by Adoption effective immediately. We feel this new moniker is an accurate reflection of who we are and what we are trying to achieve. It is also being changed so that Mission of TEARS can forever be associated with Gordon Lewis and the high ideals he stood for.

Regards,

Mark McMahon  
Chair  
Board of Directors

## Board of Directors

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**Board Chair** Mark McMahon

**Officers** Brent Walker  
Herbie Khun  
Gordon Lewis  
Scott Farrell

## Agency Staff

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**Executive Director** Sharon Gollert

**Finance and Administration** Penny Jaundoo

**File Manager** Jocelyn MacDonald

**Administration and Licensing** Rebecca O'Hagan

**Foreign Program Consultant** Gordon Lewis

## The Programs

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Family by Adoption holds a licence to facilitate non-relative and/or relative adoptions from the following countries:

- South Africa
- Haiti
- Guyana (limited number of cases)
- Nigeria (limited number of cases)
- Ghana (relative adoptions only at this time)
- Kenya

We have also requested one time licences from other countries in the past to assist families.

## Program Details

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### South Africa

**Description of the Program:** This program has a timeline of approximately 18-24 months to receive a child proposal once the applicants' dossier arrives in South Africa. This program requires applicants to make one (1) trip, with a duration of approximately 5 weeks, to South Africa.

**Children in the Program:** Children placed for inter-country adoption are predominantly male, and range in age between about 1 – 5 years of age. Most children within the program are between the ages of 2 and 3 ½ at the time of placement. South Africa does allow for the adoption of siblings, however sibling groups are especially uncommon under the age of 4.

**Post Adoption Reports:** Post adoption reports are due every six (6) months for the first 3 years of placement, and annually for the next two (2) years, for a total of 5 years of reporting.

### Haiti

**Description of the Program:** This program requires the applicant to make two (2) trips overseas. This is a French language program which means that all documentation be translated and authenticated before being sent to Haiti. Once the applicants' dossier is submitted at IBESR, the approximate timeline to receive a referral is 18-24 months.

**Children in the Program:** Children placed for inter-country adoption are predominantly male, and range in age between about 12 months to 8 years. There are sibling groups available for adoption, however they are not common.

**Post Adoption Reports:** The first post adoption report is due 6 months after the child arrives in Canada. Reports are then due annually from the date of the child's arrival in Canada for a total of 8 years. Children adopted from Crèche Enfant Jesus are required to complete reports annually until the child reaches 18 years of age.

### Guyana

**Description of the Program:** This program is a two trip program, with a timeline of 18-24 months once the applicants' dossier arrives overseas. Guyana law stipulates that a 3 month residency period is required for all adoptions, however, the court usually dispenses this residency period.

**Children in the Program:** Children available for inter country adoption are between the ages of 36 months and 10 years. There are an equal number of male and female children available for adoption, and the adoption of sibling groups is also possible.

**Post Adoption Reports:** There are no post adoption report requirements for this program.

### Kenya

**Description of the Program:** At this time, both domestic and inter-country adoptions are suspended from Kenya.

**Children in the Program:** N/A

**Post Adoption Reports:** Four (4) reports quarterly for the first 3 years and annually for the remaining two years for a total of 5 years of reporting.

### Nigeria

**Description of the Program:** This program is available for both relative and non-relative adoptions. The average timeline for adoptions from Nigeria is 18-24 months from the time the applicant receives Ministry approval. Adoption laws differ by Nigerian state, and applicants must work with a lawyer in the state from which the adoptive child resides, to complete the overseas portion of the adoption.

**Children in the Program:** Children available for adoption range in age from 6 months and up.

**Post Adoption Reports:** Post adoption reporting is done in accordance with the laws of the Nigerian province the child is adopted from.

### Ghana

**Description of the Program:** At this time, the Ghana program is only open to relative adoptions. On average, the timeline to complete a relative adoption from Ghana is 18-24 months. Applicants must also work with a lawyer in Ghana to complete the overseas portion of the adoption.

**Children in the Program:** Only the adoption of relative children, under 18 years of age, is possible at this time. A social medical history of the child must be provided with the homestudy.

**Post Adoption Reports:** There are no post adoption report requirements for this program.

## Program Statistics

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This chart depicts FBA Activity in all Canadian Provinces from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015

	South Africa	Haiti	Guyana	Kenya	Ghana	Nigeria
Adoptions Finalized	24	1	-	-	-	1
Pending Adoptions (Opened This Year)	33	6	1	-	-	3
Pending Adoptions (Ongoing from Previous Years)	10	14	-	-	-	1

Average Timeline (From Ministry Approval to Adoption Order)	24 months	36 months	24 months	N/A	24 months	24 months
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Total Fees (FBA Agency Fees, Overseas Partner Fees)	\$31,000	\$39,000	\$26,500	N/A	\$10,000	\$13,000
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**Note:** The amounts mentioned above are an overall cost estimate for international adoption. Included in these figures are the fees paid to FBA for agency services as well as overseas program and service fees. These figures do not include fees for the homestudy, adoption training, services provided by the adoption agency in your province, including review of the child proposal and preparation and management of Post Adoption Reports. They also do not include airfare, lodging, daily expenses or travel to and within the foreign country.

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## Complaint Procedure

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It is the Agency's intention to service Applicant(s) in a timely and responsible manner. If an issue arises that the Applicant(s) want to address with the Agency, the Agency would like to deal with the matter directly to resolve it. If the Applicant(s) feel that the issue is not resolved in a satisfactory manner after discussion with a director of the agency, the Applicant(s) have the option to contact a member of our Board of Directors.

If a complaint has not been resolved at the agency level, the Applicant may follow this process:

1. Email the Board of Directors at [board@familybyadoption.com](mailto:board@familybyadoption.com) stating that a complaint is being formally sent to their attention.
2. A response confirming that the email has been received will be sent from the Board of Directors.
3. The complaint must be from both Applicant(s) (where applicable), must be in writing, in a letter format (not email) and must contain sufficient detail describing the matter that they wish to address. The letter must be signed by both Applicant(s).
4. This complaint as outlined will be reviewed by the Board and a written response will be provided.