

Narrations

The Newsletter By And For Kids Who Are Touched By Adoption



P.O. Box 169 ■ Bank Plaza Station ■ Merrick, NY 11566 ■ www.NarrationsNews.com



Kahleah Guibault was born in Guatemala in 1991. She currently lives in Canada with her parents and younger brother. She is in 7th Grade. She enjoys writing, skiing, soccer and travel. She is looking forward to an upcoming trip to Guatemala and Colombia with her family.

Family and Adoption

My name is Kahleah Maria de Lourdes Guibault and I am 9 years old. I was born in Guatemala and now live in Quebec Canada. I would like to share my thoughts about family AND adoption.

There are two ways of building a family, by giving birth to a child or by adopting a child. Some people do both! Some people can not give birth so adoption helps them to have a child, a child of their very own. Adoption also gives a child a forever family. It is not just children who are adopted. My parents are adopted too. My brother and I adopted them!

Being a member of an adoptive family means having two families. One birth family and one forever family. Both families are important in different ways. If it were not for my birthparents, I would not be here reading today. I do not know where I would be without my Mom and Dad. I probably would once again NOT be reading here today.

Some people ask me if Mommy and Daddy are my **REAL** parents and if Tristan is my **REAL** brother. I answer, "You can't get more **REAL** than my family!". We write letters to my brother's birth family in Colombia. I like that.

Tristan has a birth sister named Catherine. She is 10 years old. We are like sisters because we have the same brother! I wish I could write to my birthmother. If I could, I would tell her I love her, I am okay, I am happy and loved. I have a family. I hope she is happy and loved.

On my birthday, I receive birthday cards from my foster mother Morena in Guatemala. This makes me happy and feel remembered.

I think adoption is a great way to build a family and to make people happy. To me, a family is: people who love each other, take care of each other, help and teach each other and will always be together.

Katie's Travel Story

By Katie Chun S.-B.

When my parents asked me if I wanted to go back to the orphanage where I was adopted from, I didn't know if I really wanted to go back. I didn't know what to expect. When we got to Changsha after our long tour of China, me and my friend Lizzie and her family went to look at the orphanage.

The orphanage in China looks a lot different from orphanages here. It was three stories of a big building, one story for each age of children. There was a little girl about four who had a problem with one eye. Lizzie and I asked the lady who was giving us the tour about this girl and why she had the problem. The lady said she was getting adopted pretty soon by a group who had come to adopt babies from the orphanage. She said that her adoptive parents would take her to America and get her the treatment she needed to get her eye fixed up. She may not see through it again but at least it would look better.

On another floor there were tons of babies, little teeny babies about five to twelve months old. They were all crawling around playing,

and there was one baby who was in a crib getting some medicine. Hearing how the orphanage was when I was adopted and how it is now that they have all these new things – like medicine, toys, strollers, cribs, and a lot of people helping make these children happy – made me feel really good, especially because we have contributed some money for this.

After I left the orphanage I felt a different kind of feeling, like I want to help the orphanage people buy new cribs, clothing, and toys and afford all the food to keep all the kids happy and healthy.

My advice is that if you ever go to China don't expect to see everything perfect. Just like I saw that little girl, not every single baby is born just like you were. You were very lucky to be born and not have any problems like the babies there sometimes have. And here's some more advice: if someone makes fun of you for being Chinese, just smile and say, "You can call me all the bad names you want but I'm still proud to be Chinese."

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My Experience at the 2003 KAAAN Conference

By Paul Jung Perscheid

Last summer, a month or so before school started, my Korean drumming class and I performed at the annual KAAAN conference. The KAAAN conference is an annual event held by the Korean American Adoptee Adoptive Family Network.

Ironically, the weekend the conference was being held was also the same weekend the Korean War Veteran Convention was being held. So while the young (to the veterans) were making all this hubbub over nothing, (they didn't really understand what was going on) the noble war veterans who helped save South Korea were convening and remembering times long past. Back to the conference: my Mom was the 2003 conference co-chair, so it seemed like a good idea to perform Korean music.

The conference was three days long-Friday July 25th to Sunday, July 27th. I wasn't there for Friday's festivities-I was returning from camp that day. Saturday was the main day of the conference. That Sunday would be a visit to the South Korean Ambassador to the United State's residence. There, people would be making speeches, handing out awards, and others would be performing. I, however, was scheduled to perform Saturday night during dinner.

Due to the fact that my mom was a VIP, my family was given the suite at the hotel in which conference attendees were staying. We had a living room, a bedroom, and a bathroom bigger than some people's rooms! (More on that later.) At any rate, Saturday was the day in which the adults would be attending programs in the hotel while the kids and teens took a trip around Washington and Annandale. From the hotel and back, we visited lots of places, including the White House and Koreatown. Koreatown is located within Annandale. The only difference between the



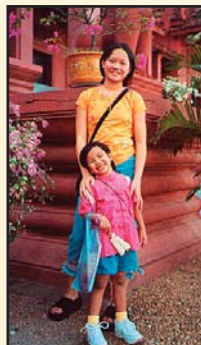
previous trips to the White House I've taken and the most recent one is that on our mini-tour, we had to line up alphabetically, and the list of restricted items stretched to purses, bags, and candy. (You just have to watch out for those snickers bombs these days!)

At any rate, we went from room to room, listening to various tour guides along the way. There was nothing new, nothing hidden, nothing really interesting, to be frank. After the White House, we proceeded to the Korean War Veteran's Memorial. As with all memorials, we were to be quiet and respectful, reading off all the dead people's names. The third installment of our trip was a fantastic lunch at a place called Il Mee. Il Mee is a buffet featuring Asian food. If you've ever been to an Asian restaurant, you might have had small grills on your table, where you could cook the meat, etc. yourself. This is what I and the rest of the tour did. After the wonderful lunch, we proceeded to explore Koreatown. There were many shops, all selling different Asian products, such as Japanese collectibles and cell phones. The book store was interesting - we didn't know it was a religious shop.

Poem by Senna Alpert

*there's no one more special
she gave me the ability
she gave me hope
she gave me freedom
she gave me life
as every moment passes by
i admire her even more
she's my mentor
she's my muse
she is everything that i could hope for
she's my mom*

— Senna Alpert



Senna Alpert came from Vietnam's Thanh Hoa orphanage in 1996 at the age of eight. The first thing her parents noticed was her exceptional ability in art. Senna is now a freshman in high school. Her hobbies are art, poetry, fashion design and video games. She is very taken with Japanese animé.

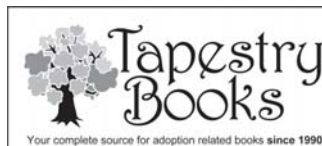


Showing a maturity beyond her years, she is a great older sister to her Sofia (pictured above) also adopted at eight from India in 1998, and Lily (shown left) adopted from Cambodia at four in 2001. She has two older brothers, Christopher, 25 and Kevin, 22.

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Finally, we returned to the hotel and hung out the rest of the day. A few hours before my group was to perform, all the members began popping into my room. We talked about how we all felt (the overall emotion was nervous) and changed into our spiffy uniforms. We practiced for a bit before joining up with another drumming group, and then the wait began.

I'll explain what we were doing a little more. Korean percussion, called samulnori, consists of four instruments. The first drum, the *changgo*, is shaped like an hourglass with two skins—one sheep, one cow, on either side. The skins are kept in place by a rope going back and forth through holes in their rims. I personally believe that this drum was the inspiration for the larger army drums, which also have the hourglass shape. The second drum, the *buk*, looks like a short, fat cylinder that bulges around the middle. This drum also has two skins, kept in place with a wooden ring connected to the base of the drum, which provides guidelines for a thick rope to go diagonally up and down between the two skins. There are also two gong instruments. The first one is a small, handheld gong called a *kwaenggari*. When you hit it, it makes a shrill metallic ring. The

second gong is larger, called the *ching*. It is kept in a large wooden frame, and has a much deeper sound than the *kwaenggari*. The most commonly played instrument is the *changgo*, followed by the *buk*. There are at most two or three *kwaenggari* players and only one *ching* player in a group.

Proceeding with our focal event, the doors to the dinner hall closed, with us standing outside them. We could hear my mom over the mic, introducing guest speakers and thanking people for coming. Every now and then, a straggler would comment on our attire before quietly sneaking into the dining hall. The situation was tense – we would be playing in front of people who know what we're performing, almost a first for us. To embarrass ourselves in front of representatives from halfway across the world would be catastrophic. You could cut the silence with a knife. A few nervous minutes later, we were called into the dining hall. We started playing before we were in the room, and walked in follow-the-leader formation, winding in and out of the round tables until we got to the front of the room. That was the first part—then the instructors continued playing while we removed our instruments from our sides and sat down to

finish the performance. After the brief reprieve, we struck up the second song, and played for a bit longer. I am proud to say I only messed up twice. When the whole thing was over, we all gathered our drums and went back to my room. Before we changed back into our street clothes, my group and instructors all stood in my extremely large bathtub and took a picture (*all nine of us!*). After the group picture, we changed back into our clothes and the group left.

Paul Jung Perscheid (known to family and friends as P.J.) was born on April 5, 1989 in Seongnam, Kyonggi-do, South Korea. He was adopted by Ralf and Margie Perscheid, and came to the U.S. at the age of 6 months. P.J. is a freshman at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Alexandria, Virginia. In addition to Korean drumming, his hobbies include anything video - games, anime, computer programming, and staying connected with his friends. P.J. lives in Alexandria with his parents, and sister Mara DaHee also from Korea.

KAAN is the Korean American Adoptee Adoptive Family Network. The organization involves adoptees, adoptive parents and Korean Americans. The 6th Annual KAAN Conference "Building Connections, Honoring Differences" will be held July 23-25, 2004 in San Francisco at The Clarion Hotel San Francisco Airport. For more information on KAAN or next year's conference, visit www.kaanet.com, call 916 - 933-1447 or email kaanet@aol.com.



By Maria Haas, age 6,
adopted from Jiujiang, Jiangxi, China.

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