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Summer 2016 Newsletter

Learn to do what is right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed,
 defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow and the orphan. Isaiah 1:17

Let it go, give over control, He is Enough.

By Sheila De Jong, Katelyn's Fund Founder and President of the Board

Even when we acknowledge that we need to listen to the Spirit and look what the Lord is doing, why then do things seem so hard sometimes? Why do some things continue to fester or some things continue to hurt us so? It seems even when we recognize something that it is difficult, or know we need to release it, it is so very hard. Even when it feels like we in the midst of plague, He continues to hear us and is working in ways many times unseen to us. When we are in desperate places, sometimes we hold on so tightly to things. I know He continues to teach me and I need to confess that I'm trying to be self-sufficient, trying to hold on, trying to overcome, but in His graciousness He shows this devastating and affirming reality at the same time, that He is in control, I am not.

I have to give control back to Him it seems, like so many times. Yet in His mercy and in His kindness, I hear His gentle whisper say "let it go". These three little words "let it go", seems so very simple and easy to say, and yet so incredibly hard to do. Certainly a lot more challenging than the ballad that they sing in the "Frozen" movie, where she ran off in isolation wanting to hide and then has the revelation that she could just let things go into beautiful ice creations. I wonder if there are bits and pieces that resonate with us in that simple story, our heart's good intentions with love, and yet there doesn't seem to be an easy answer. What are the things that we cling too so incredibly tightly? What are the things that we simply cannot let go of? What things are crippling our thoughts? Relationships? Honestly, even paralyzing us in fear instead of moving forward and listening to what He has in store.

Caring for orphans and working in international relationships, foster care, and adoption are incredibly challenging. There are great sacrifices that come from choosing this journey. Don't be mistaken, there are deep blessings, but this is a journey. As with adoption itself, is filled with great grief and loss, as well as security and joy. These challenges can dig us deep and force us to ask questions, making us rethink parenting relationships, viewpoints from others, self-sufficiency and community attitudes, and can quite frankly plummet us to the point of knowing that He is the only answer and that all things need to be released and given back to Him. It always seems so shockingly simple and also so incredibly freeing to me at the same time. It feels like a choice for us to release things to Him but the reality is, these things already belong to Him.

I think in this revelation, in this understanding, in this choice to truly let it go, He gives us the opportunity to choose dependence on Him. To choose to be OK with knowing that we don't see everything and trusting that He does, to choose that when we let it go, He is strong enough to carry it. Even in the sweetest times of understanding this, seeing His mercy and His grace in tangible action, and wanting to sit and soak in His presence, it's very alarming how quickly we can pick things back up and try to do things on our own again.

We serve a mighty God, a loving Father, and a faithful Friend. He demonstrates to us over and over again that He is big enough, strong enough, trustworthy enough, loving enough, and faithful enough for us to give Him everything. Even the things that utterly break our hearts that we don't understand we need to let go. The unspoken things we never want anyone to see, the sharp arrows the enemy directs at us to deeply wound us, the unfulfilled desires of our heart still hanging out there, places we need His strength to fill that are far deeper than us, the heartaches that there are no words for...all of that, every single thing, all of it, He is enough.

Orphan care is very hard. Orphan care is one of the sweetest ways to come in close to the Father's presence. Orphan care brings the deepest of joys and glimpses into heaven. However, working here comes at great costs. My encouragement in this day, in the unfathomably hard and the sweetest of joys, He remains the same, over and over again, He declares His faithfulness. He welcomes us just as we are, not in comparison to anyone else, not based on accomplishment or achievement, or anything we could figure out on our own, He welcomes us as His child. It was complicated and costly for Him, as well, much sacrifice took place with palatable pain, and yet, great joy was in the midst and is to come.

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Mission Statement

Speaking boldly for the fatherless.
 Advocating that all children,
 regardless of circumstance, race,
 or origin, are children of God, and
 deserve physical and spiritual
 restoration, implemented by the
 body of Christ, in obedience to the
 commands of the Father

*We are changing up the picnic to
 another family event this year.*

Watch for details coming soon!



Love fiercely and choose the mess.

By Lindsey Kuipers

As we sat on the beach in the early morning Haitian sun, preparing for one of our final days at the orphanage, it was this phrase above that the Holy Spirit continued to press on my heart.

You hear the full scheme of clichés each time you take a group on an international mission trip, perhaps the most popular of which is: “They have so little and yet are so happy...” And in so many ways, this statement is ten fold’s true. Our kids are radiating with joy. They love to cuddle and laugh and sing songs to Jesus. They dance with un-abandonment and speak so graciously. They thrive in the spotlight of attention and can play for hours without becoming weary. Their worth isn’t found in a busy schedule or Facebook friend list. It’s beautiful. But alongside this beauty, there is a deeper reality at play -one we don’t often glimpse in a seven day visit. One that’s a bit messier. One that’s a bit more real.

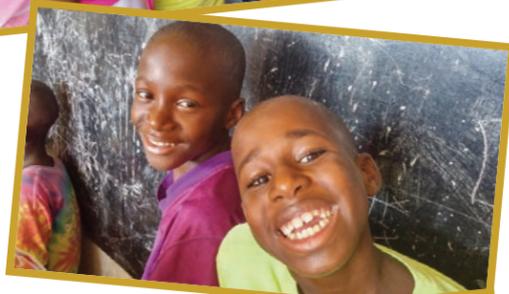
I felt like it was the Lord’s blessing to let us see a bit more of that real mess on our last trip, and in return, to respond like a family does - to correct...and to encourage, to break down walls...and to build each other up, to celebrate the fullness...and to mourn the brokenness, Together. It’s that unique togetherness that the Lord is writing into our story that I find to be so, so good.

I read these words recently in a devotional:

The tension is there - wondering when to celebrate and when to cry. Often the best thing we can do is acknowledge that tension and do both, seeking the Lord as we navigate the complexities of this world. We must never stop mourning brokenness. It is right to mourn. And we must never cease to celebrate life and beauty. It is right to dance. (She Reads Truth)

As we left Haiti this last time, hugging each of our beloved little ones and their mommies with tear streaked faces, it was this very concept that was heavy on my heart. Because these dear ones who sing and dance and play and laugh do give us so many reasons to celebrate, but at the same time, in a broken nation with a broken system full of broken people, there are also so many reasons to grieve. And it’s here in this hard place, as sugar-coated surfaces breaks open and what is underneath gushes out that I hear the Father says, “Don’t run from this, but embrace and believe I can use all things for my glory”.

He does it with all of our messes - here and there. It’s not perfect, but it’s beautiful. After all, he doesn’t say “protect yourself and stay clean”. He commands, “Pick up My cross and walk”. Love fiercely, and choose the mess.



REFLECTIONS FROM TRIP GOERS:

“I’m not sure how it is possible, but after every trip, I grow to love our kids more and more as they continue to steal pieces of my heart. The Spirit is heavy over these kids, not only showing me that God loves them in an incredible deeper way than I ever could, but also making me so excited to see God’s plan for them unfold. - Aftyn Vermeer

“Returning to Haiti this summer was a huge blessing. I miss the kids so much. However, leaving them and coming back home was by far the hardest part. Being apart from the kids I have grown to love so deeply is very difficult. We had a great trip deepening relationships with the kids and staff. I miss the pure joy they radiate and the all love they give. I also miss seeing God’s love through them, blessing everyone they meet. My prayer for these kids is as they grow, they will keep God in their hearts and that they will be brave and believe that they can do great things with God by their sides. I praise God for the amazing kind-hearted kids they are”. -Ashley Zwart

SPECIAL THANKS to Tonia Wouldstra who handcrafted incredible individual self-care kits for each of our older girls. And also to Operation Prom Dress of Sioux Center who donated 121 dresses so each of our girls could choose one and wear it to a very special banquet held for them.

Connecting and Community

by Tammy Zevenbergen, Katelyn’s Fund Support Team

We need community and we need connection. We all do. We hope that in this coming year the Lord deepens both community and connections.

The support team has been asking the Lord how we can best walk beside, help, and encourage families as we walk through the hard stuff of parenting our children from hard places. We are so excited to be able to give parents some more tools for their toolbox and to grow deeper community this year. We are excited to have Darcie Van Voorst come and be our teacher and helper each month this year. We are praying for you, those who come often, those who have not come in a long time, and those who have not ever come yet, we know that we need one another and need community and connection. We humbly invite you and pray He will strengthen us in this coming year. Be encouraged this summer and join us in the fall as Darcie helps to lead us into more understanding and gives tangible tools.

Darcie has been working with at-risk youth for close to 15 years in various positions including being an in-home counselor, a tracking officer, a school liaison officer, and in a residential setting; but it was adopting two older children from the foster care system ten years ago that truly ignited her passion and understanding in helping children heal from trauma. Darcie was trained by Karyn Purvis, David Cross, and their team at the Texas Christian University in Trust Based Relational Interventions (TBRI) and now is a TBRI educator. Darcie currently offers trainings for parents and professionals across Iowa, parent classes locally, and is looking to expand to working individually with parents as a parent coach. From a professional and personal perspective, Darcie offers hope for healing by helping parents learn the life changing methods of TBRI. Darcie’s passion and purpose in life is to help families overcome the challenges they are facing.

Here is summary of what we will be working on this year. We will let you know a couple weeks before what the topic will be.

Hope for Healing: Trust Based Relational Interventions (TBRI)

Overwhelmed? Frustrated? Worn Out? Running out of options? Desire more peace and connection in your home? Then it’s time for you to learn the life changing ways of Trust Based Relational Interventions (TBRI). Throughout our time together this year, we will uncover the complexities that trauma has brought to our families by discussing the changes that have happened to our chil-

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Listen and Look what the Lord is doing!

Listen and look what the Lord is doing, He is mightier than all the challenges that are put before us! Many families continue to listen to His calling for them to move forward with adoption, even though international adoptions have been hard with many complications with countries. Domestic adoptions are increasing but also see complications; and many being called in foster care are also walking in complications every day as well. We are so thankful for many families that are listening to the Spirit through all of this and saying yes to His leading in adoption.

Look what the Lord is doing through families, communities, and countries – He is bountifully providing adoption grants for those stepping forward. Rejoice with us in His covering and graciousness. We have seen Him bring children home from 40 different countries, into 46 states, and into hundreds of churches and communities. Praise Him!

GRANTS SINCE 2006

Total Grant Count:	467	Cities Involved:	301
Total Grant Amount:	\$1,334,000	State Involved:	46
Children Adopted:	575	Countries Adopted From:	40

The Lord is unshakable and He delights in those who listen and look for Him! Nothing is impossible or too complicated for Him, He is mightier than all of these things. We rejoice in His provision. Please continue to pray if you can pour in, so He can use us as a Body to give out. We humbly need you to help us walk this journey as we continue to be a lay ministry where all of the funds go directly to families and children.

He is continuing to teach us much in this season of much with our Haiti family. We continue to listen to His heart in caring for these 63 children in the orphanage and what that means for us as a ministry to carry this financial load. We continue to pray and wait, looking to Him as the only one capable of doing. Please see Lindsey’s Haiti update as to the cries of our hearts for these precious ones and the evidence of His continued care.

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dren's brains, bodies, biology, and belief systems. We will spend time developing a basic understanding of the brain and will quickly see that in order to understand our child's behaviors, we have to understand their brain. Understanding our child will not only help us understand how to help our children heal and overcome their challenges, it will also help us move from a place of frustration to compassion. We will discuss why traditional approaches will not work with our children, and how a connected style of parenting (like TBRI) will bring peace and healing to our homes. TBRI is a holistic approach and will give you the tools you need to create a healing environment for your child. We will take a close look at the three principles of TBRI: empowering principles, connecting principles, and correcting principles. As you begin implementing these principles, you will start seeing positive changes in your home. My three goals for this year are to educate, equip, and empower you to continue to press on. I am beyond excited to begin this journey with you....

The Cotter Family

Brandon and Melissa

**Children: Autumn (7), Brooklyn (4) and Caidyn (2) -
Not pictured is our foster son Tristan (3)**

Church: Galloway Full Gospel Church, Springfield, MO



Tears of joy and tears of grief. Adoption is born out of both, brokenness and love.

Going back to our adoption day video, 2-year-old Caidyn was handed to us by a cheerful nanny who had been our son's most beloved caretaker in Tianjin, China. While our eyes were fixed on Caidyn easily coming to his mommy, the camera was recording. The camera captured the grief and pain written across Ms. Ma's face, knowing she would never see Caidyn again.

As a foster family ourselves, we are familiar with the grief when a child leaves the last time. This transition is bitter sweet, we see the transition involving the broken and the loved. This was one of many motivators in our pursuit of international adoption and for our sweet boy, Caidyn.

Nearly 20 years ago a seed was planted in my heart to adopt. I experienced the pain of a wrecked family along with the desire to adopt from an orphanage in China. But I first had to meet an age requirement. Fast forward to my 30th birthday, my husband Brandon and I were pushing through the paperwork as our adoption story was finally unfolding. The dream of the 13-year-old girl was being fulfilled.

After having two daughters, Autumn and Brooklyn, we were certain another girl would be in our future. After six months of working through the paperwork for our international adoption, we experienced a difficult situation in our fostering world that forced us to let go of a baby boy to a biological family member. This turned us from seeking another girl to letting God lead us to the right child. Within days we were directed to our son's profile.

We forfeited a considerable amount of money to switch agencies to continue our path toward Caidyn. There were moments when financial stress weighed heavily above us, but we stood firm knowing God would provide. Those who spoke to us with Katelyn's Fund offered such genuine support through prayer, the monetary help was secondary to the spiritual support.

God made provisions with each and every step we made and we are certain God heard all the prayers on behalf of our family. God uses so many aspects of our lives to draw us closer and to teach us lessons. Adoption is one that continues to teach us that you can find purpose in the pain, that there is healing amidst the wounds, and that love truly can conquer all.

Caidyn has transitioned so well in the couple months we have been together. Caidyn loves hugs and kisses, especially when it means he can tackle his sisters in the process. He is a quick learner. He loves to be ornery when his speech therapist is around. His favorite activities are laughing and eating! His smile is contagious. There is no doubt he is spreading love and joy wherever he goes, and we are blessed to have his love and joy in our home.

The Hansen Family

Justin and Kathy

Children: Availya, and Evalina

**Soon to be added to their family: Oskar, Igor,
and Aleksander.**

Church: Radford Baptist Church, Moneta, VA



We both had a burden for adoption long before we even met. In fact, it was a deciding factor in us getting married. Even before we were married, we started praying together that God would prepare us for adoption and use us in an adoption ministry. We believe that all Christians are commanded to take care of orphans. In James 1:27, God says, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress..."

In our original family plan, we were going to have one or two biological children first, and then adopt. What followed was two and a half years of tears, frustration, and confusion about not being able to conceive. After much prayer and seeking of the Lord's guidance, we felt God's leading in our lives to pursue adoption. There is a peace that has come over us since we have decided that God's plan is better than ours. We decided that instead of putting money towards fertility testing and treatment, we could use that money to give a home and loving family to orphans. We adopted our twin daughters from Bulgaria in November 2014, at the age of 7. We have been so blessed by having them in our lives. We knew that we wanted to adopt again one day, but we wanted to wait for God's leading. After we had the girls home for a year, we both started to feel nudged toward adopting again. We didn't know where to start, so we started to look up different programs, considering domestic adoption first, as we didn't want to go through fundraising for an international adoption again. However, we ultimately want to do what God wants us to do. We didn't feel God leading us to adopt domestically, so we started looking at waiting children profiles. We felt drawn to a profile of 3 brothers in Poland. We felt crazy to even be considering adopting 3 more children, so we prayed a lot! We continually asked God to close the doors if we are not to pursue these boys. He has continually reaffirmed that this is the path He has for us. We are committed to following through with God's plan as He leads us. We both have a strong desire and big heart for older sibling groups. Without families who are willing to take in more than one at a time, these children would either be split up or never adopted. We truly feel that this is our purpose, to fulfill James 1:27, and give a home to orphans who may never have one otherwise.

Katelyn's Fund has helped us pay for adoption expenses that we could not afford. God has used them in our journey to bring our precious boys home. But more importantly, it has brought these boys one step closer to learning about the love of a Savior who died on a cross for them!

The Murphy Family

James and Lisa

Children: Madolyn (10), Joseph (7), Charlie (6), Lulu (6) just home!

Church: St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Church, Delray Beach, FL



My husband and I started our family a little later than most. As we approached our forties, we began looking into adoption, and it changed our lives. We have completed five adoptions in the last ten years.

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It all started with our precious daughter, Madolyn (10), whom we brought home from China as a one-year old infant in 2006. Miss Madi opened our hearts to more love than we knew we had in us. She is the light of our lives.

Within two years, the Holy Spirit called us back, and we adopted our gift named Daniel in January of 2010. He was a two-year-old baby boy who had four major heart defects, and he changed us forever. We were given the chance to love Daniel in his physical presence for four months, but then the Lord took him Home to Heaven when his body couldn't recover from the open-heart surgery that he desperately needed. Our first son made an imprint on us that will last a lifetime.

We were devastated, but even through the storms, God gave us rainbows, and He called us back yet again. It seemed impossible to start the process all over again, but we knew we had to trust God and follow His lead. We were led to our son, Charlie, less than a year after our sweet Daniel had earned his angel wings.

In December of 2012, I knew inside that it was time for us to answer the call again. God had given many signs, but fear was overcoming Jim's heart. I promised Jim that God would provide, if he would simply say yes. Thank God, Jim did say yes, and God did provide. We brought our son, Joseph, home in September of 2014!

I knew we still had more love to give. I patiently prayed for peace in my husband's heart, as I predicted that he would again be fearful for financial reasons. Finally, after heart to heart discussions, Jim knew there was no good reason to say "no" to another child—he'd seen God's provision before. That's when I saw "Lulu" posted on an advocacy site. She was five years old and had lived in an orphanage since she was a small baby. I knew in my heart that she was the missing piece in our family.

My husband and I stepped out in blind faith for financial provision, and thanks to the generous donors Katelyn's Fund, we were able to bring Lulu home to our family in May! We are filled with gratitude that Katelyn's Fund is one of the ways in which God made Lulu's adoption happen. This calling comes with sacrifice sometimes. My husband and I gave up many material possessions when we discovered what really matters in life, and God has blessed our family with these beautiful children. We feel privileged to have heard his call. Adoption has been the single most rewarding choice of our lives. Friends, the road of adoption is not always easy, but it is always worth it.

The Salazar Family

Jason and Jennie

Children: Jackson (17), Cameron (15), Josie (8), Diego (4)

Church: James River Church, Ozark, MO



Our adoption journey began in May of 2012. This is when we first felt God lead us to adopt for a 2nd time. Our first adoption was from Haiti in 2010 and we saw God work a miracle in our daughter's life. This opened our eyes to the great need for orphan care in Haiti and showed us that we have been given the ability to do something about it.

We officially began the process in December of 2012. We had no idea how God would stretch our faith over almost a 4 year long journey. It was an emotional leap of faith as well as financial. But we trusted God to complete what He called us to do.

After completing mountains of paperwork we began to hardest part of the process which was to wait. And wait we did! On February 13, 2015 we got the long awaited phone call from our agency. It's a boy! We were told we had been matched with a 3 year old boy named Diego. All of a sudden it became very real. We had a son. The next step of the journey was a required 14 day socialization trip. We left for Haiti in March. We met our son and were able to spend a wonderful 2 weeks with him. We thought the hardest part was behind us but we were wrong. It was going to be another year before we would be able to bring our boy home. As hard as it was to leave him, we trusted God to help us remain strong.

Finally, on April 8th we received a scanned visa from USCIS. It was time to pick up our son. We flew to Haiti and were finally reunited with our little boy! We decided to spend a few days in Haiti. It was a wonderful time. On April 22, 2016 we

Continued on next page

flew home with our son. Nearly 4 years after the journey began, it was over and our family was complete.

We came home to a crowd of very excited people at the airport. The most excited were our 3 children. It is hard to put into words the feeling of having your family together after such a hard and emotion filled process.

As we reflect on the last 4 years, we can't help but be overwhelmed with gratefulness. Firstly, to our heavenly Father for allowing us to be a part of this plan and for strengthening us for a road that we could not have walked without His help. Secondly, to Katelyn's Fund. We could not have done this without your financial and prayer support. You are truly being used of the Lord to change the lives of children. We are so grateful and hope that in the future God will enable us to pay it forward.

Thank you! Last, to our church, family and friends. Their support helped carry us and now to see their love for our son is such a blessing.

Thank you does not seem adequate. We are grateful beyond words. May God richly bless your ministry as you continue to change lives.

The Solano Family

Gerardo and Constance

Children : Monsi 16, Tati 13, Gabriel 8, Jade 4

Looking to adopt: Kai and Maya

Church: Church Bayside , Rocklin, CA



Our son was diagnosed with Down Syndrome at birth in 2008. From that time, 5 years, we contemplated adoption, but had to get through a lot of medical issues with him. We had lost everything between the market crashing and our son in the hospital. He had 10 surgeries in 10 months. We had to start over completely from zero. Our savings, retirement, investments and our home were all gone.

Once we had jobs and a home again, we decided that we had better get on with our adoption while timing was mostly right. We brought home our daughter 2 years ago. She is now 4 years old, also diagnosed with Down Syndrome and the best thing we've ever done. She has been an incredible blessing and source of joy for our entire family.

We are ready to go back to China to complete our family. We are in need of a sister and a brother. The children that God has planned for us are also diagnosed with Down Syndrome. God has broken our hearts over the plight of the orphan and we have room in our home and in our hearts. Bringing home 2 children is quite a financial commitment, but we feel that God has called us to these two children and that He will supply all our needs.

We have seen God multiply our efforts and our finances beyond our imaginations. Katelyn's Fund has been an enormous part of that blessing. We were overwhelmed by their love and commitment to rescue children. Their prayers over us and our family have been felt and answered. To know that God is calling people we've never met to walk with us on this journey, to give and to pray with us, and to pray over these children, has been a profound experience. It's in the stepping over the edge, that we find the miracles. The team at Katelyn's Fund is living on the other side of the edge. We cannot thank you enough for your tremendous love and sacrificial giving of your time and resources and for all of the people that God has called to give to your ministry. We know that God's heart is here and we're so blessed and humbled to be walking this journey with you.

Thank you!

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I pray in this day, in this season for many, that the Father gives encouragement and visible glimpses of hopes, places of peace, insight to take a step back, to listen and look who He is and who we are in Him. Asking that He will then give us the steadfastness to release what we hold tightly to, that we will stop trying to manage, reinvent, to figure everything out, that we simply will be able to let things go. Trusting that if we can let things go, He releases the Spirit of peace, confidence, and joy. That if we let things go, He shows us that He goes ahead of us, He goes behind us, and He walks beside us, so as we let things go, we can more freely go to Him and receive from Him, and to begin to understand that He is enough.