

The Loving Shepherd

Spring 2005

Volume 3, Issue 1

Family shows that love transcends language

The little finger points to the white quilt, adorned with family photos, hanging on the wall. The girl pointing the finger immediately finds the picture of the smiling couple.

"Mama y Papa," seven-year-old Katrina says, smiling.

She and her sister, six-year-old Ayanna, can only speak Russian, but "Papa" Don Fiechter and "Mama" Suzie Fiechter congratulate Katrina in English.

She doesn't understand the words, but she can interpret her parents' smiles.

The girls, recently adopted from Ukraine, arrived in Bluffton, Ind., on Saturday, March 19, after the Fiechters spent five weeks in Ukraine.

Now, Katrina and Ayanna are learning to adjust to a life of pet dogs, roller blades, church and, perhaps most foreign, a family.

"They didn't eat together; they didn't sleep together," Don said, "but they loved being together."

Don and Suzie, who have nine biological children and three grandchildren, first started praying about adoption in the fall of 2003. By March of 2004, they were ready to take action, and they knew they needed help.

"We had no idea where

to go first," Suzie said.

She said it was wonderful to go to LSI and learn what adoption options were available.

"Without that, I don't know what we would have done," she said "It would have been confusing."

Because some countries aren't receptive to large families, LSI had to research dozens of countries to find the few that would work with the Fiechters. LSI recommended five countries, including Ukraine.

"They condensed I don't know how many months work into a meeting and a paper," Don said.

With peace in their hearts about Ukraine, Don and Suzie started the process, and they flew to Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, on Feb. 13. They spent five weeks there working through the legal system before bringing the girls home.

They also spent about two and a half hours a day with the girls in the orphanage.

About 60 children total, all between the ages of 2 and 7, lived in the orphanage. Each child shared a room with about nine other children. Each group had a sleeping area, a little kitchen,

See "Family" on pg. 3



Don and Suzie Fiechter (center) pose with their new family. **Top row (left to right):** Brooke, 10; Holly, 16; Tianne, 7. **Bottom row (left to right):** Wendy, 14; Ayanna, 6; Katrina, 7; Krista, 13. Not pictured is Shauna, 18; and their married daughters, Heidi Reinhard, 26; Jannon Furrer, 25; and Amy Gerber, 23.



Who We Are

Loving Shepherd International is a Christian, not-for-profit adoption organization providing no-cost, unbiased services to families. While we do not place children, we help families in the pre-adoption, adoption and post-adoption phases of international and domestic adoptions.

Look inside:

Mike Pence participates in dedication of new office	2
Volunteers come together to build new office	2
Loving Shepherd helps more than 200 families	3
New benefit CD coming soon	3

Mike Pence to help dedicate new Loving Shepherd office

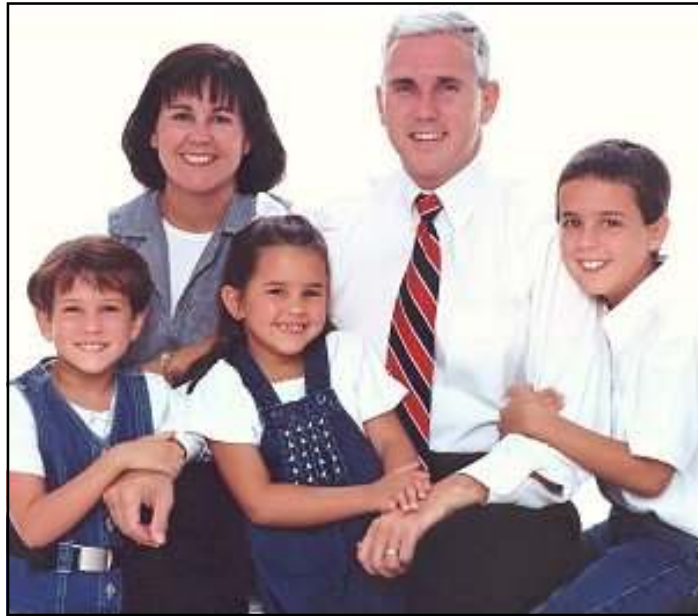
U.S. Rep. Mike Pence attended a formal dedication ceremony at Loving Shepherd International's new office on Thursday, March 31.

Pence, first elected in 2000, has repeatedly taken a pro-life and pro-family stance in Congressional debates. He pushed adoption-reform legislation as an alternative to abortion, and he sponsored a bill that would help legally preserve marriage between a man and a woman.

Once, when asked to describe himself, Pence replied "a Christian, a conservative and a Republican, in that order."

During the dedication, he spoke about family values, pro-life initiatives and adoption. The group Becky & Ronda also performed.

Adopted children, along with several families



Mike Pence, pictured with his family, has fought for family values throughout his four years in the nation's House of Representatives.

and others, attended as well.

For those who couldn't attend, LSI will hold an open house at a later date.

Pence and LSI have worked together several

times. He also nominated LSI for the 2003 Angels in Adoption Award, a national award given annually to organizations that help in adoption.

From the Word

- By Ed Schwartz

Someone once asked for a definition of the term "adoption." A little girl simply said, "Adoption is when you love someone so much you ask them to come and live with you."

The words adoption and love are synonymous. The dictionary uses many definitions to describe "love." However, one picture of an adopted child in the arms of a new mom or dad gives us all the definition of love we need.

To a believer, the obvious parallel of the adoption of a child equates to God's love for us. Adoption is a Godly and Biblical principle of 21st century life.

Benefit Auction reminder

The third-annual Loving Shepherd benefit auction, to be held on Friday, April 8, will feature the largest item LSI has ever sold: a 14-foot Splendorcat boat and trailer.

This year, LSI decided to move the auction to Friday to better accommodate people's schedules. LSI also moved it earlier in the year so it won't conflict with travel plans.

Volunteers will start serving meals at 5 p.m., with the auction starting at 6 p.m. There will also be a silent auction.

Other items for sale this year include vacations to Marco Island, Fla., and Prescott, Ariz., tools, handcrafted items and an hour of singing from the Psalm 100 Quartet.

Thanks to those who have contributed. Your support continues to help LSI help hurting children.

Volunteers help with new office for LSI



Dozens of workers, including those pictured here, spent many days remodeling the new office. Many businesses also donated materials for free or at cost.

Loving Shepherd International wants to thank the dozens of volunteers who helped transform the former Precision Print building into LSI's new office. We also want to thank the person who sold us the building at a greatly reduced price. The building stands as a monument to the power of Christian charity.

Loving Shepherd first purchased the building, erected in 1904, on Nov. 29, and by Jan. 6, Loving Shepherd's staff had moved in.

221 families contact LSI for assistance

Between Jan. 1 and March 13, Loving Shepherd helped more than 200 families. Each family had a story – a story that always confirmed the need for Loving Shepherd’s no-cost, unbiased services. For instance ...

Texas — "We both love children very much but have found ourselves unable to have any children of our own. Can you please send us information?"

"I'd love any help/direction you can give us. What a great ministry! Thank you."

"We received your information today and greatly appreciate the work ..."

North Carolina — "We felt led to adopt from China, but we were denied due to the financial requirement. This is heartbreaking for us. Can you please help us?"

Ohio — "I am looking for an international agency that we can put our trust in. There are so many, and we do not know enough about this to make a good choice. Can you help?"

Ohio — "We are just beginning our search. It's overwhelming."

Missouri — "I'd love

any help/direction you can give us. What a great ministry! Thank you."

Pennsylvania — "We received your information today and greatly appreciate the work you've done."

Arkansas — One family wrote that they had tried everything to have a child, but because they can't, they want to adopt. However, they "have no idea how to begin the process."

Indiana — Loving Shepherd also helps families who are growing discouraged during the adoption process. One person wrote to us saying that her and her husband had been waiting for a child for almost two years because of complications with her agency. When she first contacted the agency, she said, she didn't know what questions to ask, and since then, she has had to jump through numerous hoops and redo her paperwork four times. She is now looking to LSI for advice.

However, long before she started the adoption process, she had met the president of LSI. Though he gave her a business card, she did not think to use our services when she started.

"I finally located your business card a little too late," she wrote to us a few weeks ago.

Not only do families wanting to adopt contact us, adoption agencies use the services of LSI as well. Some want to expand their services to other countries and seek the expertise of LSI in developing their programs.



Ryan Fiechter, a member of Loving Shepherd's board of directors, hugs his son Gabe as they pose for the cover of Loving Shepherd's new CD, "The Picture of Love." LSI will sell the CDs at the April 8 benefit auction. They will then be available through Loving Shepherd's new office, Provident Bookstores in Berne and elsewhere.

The CD features 18 songs from seven Christian groups: Becky & Ronda, Cornerstone, Fishers of Men, Heartland Quartet, New Life Quartet, Kingdom Quartet and the Psalm 100 Quartet.

Family: Children rarely run and play at orphanage

and study and play areas.

The orphanage also offered a large playground, but Don and Suzie said they rarely saw children use it. The caretakers didn't have time to watch kids who were scampering around, so to avoid injury, the children mostly did "seat work," Don said.

While at the orphanage, the children also had no introduction to God.

Don, Suzie, Katrina, Ayanna and a missionary were eating once when the missionary asked the girls where the food came from.

The missionary said, "God gives us our food," and the girls replied, "What's God?"

Fortunately, one of the

first places Katrina and Ayanna went when they arrived in America was church.

On Monday, March 21, their second full day in the states, Katrina and Ayanna began what will be many typical weeks with their new family: playing with the dogs, learning to adapt to new styles (high heels were very popular in Russia, so already Katrina has tried to wear a pair right out of bed) and learning the language.

"Their whole world has changed in the last week, more than ours does in a lifetime," Suzie said.

And while it will take some time to learn, the resilient girls know how to smile, giggle and hug, and those need no translation.

*The official newsletter of Loving
Shepherd International*

PO Box 375
Bluffton, IN 46714

Phone: 260-824-9000
Fax: 260-824-9002
Email: Info@loving-shepherd.org

**Visit our Web site at:
www.loving-shepherd.org**

Mission Statement

The mission of *Loving Shepherd International* is to bring honor to God by providing objective, no-cost advocacy, resources and direction to the entire spectrum of the international and domestic adoption field for the direct benefit of families and children.

This is accomplished by following the example of Jesus Christ as the loving shepherd in Isaiah 40:11: *"He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arms, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."*



PO Box 375
Bluffton, IN 46714
(260) 824-9000

ADDRESS LABEL
