

1-26-05 Guest Speaker: Jane Cramer; Topic – “International Adoption 101”

Brooklyn1943 - We will be starting the hosted chat about international adoption in two minutes

Brooklyn1943 - Please stick around, it should be interesting.

Moderator - It's time to leave for now. Please feel free to return to the NJARCH website and read more about Adoption. Until next time, Good night

Moderator - logged off - using Mozilla/5.0 (Windows; U; Windows NT 5.1; en-US; rv:1.7.2) Gecko/20040804 Netscape/7.2 (ax) on 1/26 at 8:59pm CST)

BearHug - logged on. - using Mozilla/5.0 (Windows; U; Windows NT 5.1; en-US; rv:1.7.2) Gecko/20040804 Netscape/7.2 (ax) on 1/26 at 9:04pm CST)

BearHug - logged off - using Mozilla/5.0 (Windows; U; Windows NT 5.1; en-US; rv:1.7.2) Gecko/20040804 Netscape/7.2 (ax) on 1/26 at 9:04pm CST)

**BearHug REMOTE_HOST(IP) - 138.89.163.62

mikesmom - logged on. - using Mozilla/4.0 (compatible; MSIE 6.0; Windows NT 5.0; Q312461) on 1/26 at 9:05pm CST)

moarchb - logged on. - using Mozilla/5.0 (Windows; U; Windows NT 5.1; en-US; rv:1.7.2) Gecko/20040804 Netscape/7.2 (ax) on 1/26 at 9:05pm CST)

BearHug - logged on. - using Mozilla/5.0 (Windows; U; Windows NT 5.1; en-US; rv:1.7.2) Gecko/20040804 Netscape/7.2 (ax) on 1/26 at 9:06pm CST)

**moarchb REMOTE_HOST(IP) - 68.45.34.245

Brooklyn1943 - hi, bear hug, welcome to the chat

**mikesmom REMOTE_HOST(IP) - 141.153.245.242

moarchb - logged off - using Mozilla/5.0 (Windows; U; Windows NT 5.1; en-US; rv:1.7.2) Gecko/20040804 Netscape/7.2 (ax) on 1/26 at 9:06pm CST)

**BearHug REMOTE_HOST(IP) - 138.89.163.62

mikesmom - Hello, has the guest chat person arrived?

Brooklyn1943 - Welcome all, we're having some technical difficulty getting our speaker on

monarchb - logged on. - using Mozilla/5.0 (Windows; U; Windows NT 5.1; en-US; rv:1.7.2) Gecko/20040804 Netscape/7.2 (ax) on 1/26 at 9:06pm CST)

Brooklyn1943 - Hi everyone! I thought we could start with intros.

**monarchb REMOTE_HOST(IP) - 68.45.34.245

Brooklyn1943 - My name is Jane Cramer. I've worked for Welcome House Adoption Program of Pearl S. Buck International for over 5 years. During that time I've worked directly with adoption programs in China, Korea, the Philippines, Cambodia, Russia,

Romania and India. I've also completed home studies and post placement visits and conducted pre-adoption trainings. I'm an adoptive mom – my daughter, Sina came home from Cambodia in May 2002 at 9 months of age. She's 3 now and an amazing little girl.

Brooklyn1943 - Could everyone else introduce themselves and let me know if there's anything in particular you'd like to chat about tonight?

Brooklyn1943 - I am posting Jane's comments as they are e-mailed to me until she can log on to the chat

inpa - logged on. - using Mozilla/4.0 (compatible; MSIE 6.0; Windows NT 5.0; AT&T CSM8.0) on 1/26 at 9:11pm CST)

mikesmom - Hi, I'm Kathy from njarch, I was wondering if there is anything new in the world of International Adoption that we should know about.

**inpa REMOTE_HOST(IP) - 146.186.87.148

BearHug - Hello, I am interested in learning more about International Adoption for my cousin

monarchb - Hi I'm Amanda

BearHug - And I am Maryann

monarchb - I'm an adoptee

Brooklyn1943 - One thing that's new is that folks are interested in the tsunami kids

monarchb - I am black raised by white parents

monarchb - I have participated in transracial adoption trainings

inpa - hi I'm interested in international adoption but I am afraid (terrified more like it) to fly. Is there any countries in which is possible to adopt without getting on a plane?

Brooklyn1943 - Jane says she doubts the countries affected by the Tsunami don't have adoption programs in place

monarchb - my sister was adopted from guatemala

BearHug - What is the maximum age for International Adoptive Parents.

Brooklyn1943 - Korea, India and Guatemala allow adoptions with escorts

Brooklyn1943 - Age 50 or younger for kids under age 2

Brooklyn1943 - As high as 60 to adopt older children

inpa - What are the marriage length requirements for Korea, India & Guatemala?

BearHug - Good to know. My cousin and her husband are 43

Brooklyn1943 - My own comment, bear in mind how old parents will be by the time child finishes college

monarchb - How long are adoption agencies waiting before they put tsumai kids up for adoption?

mikesmom - When you speak about escorts does that mean the someone else can bring the child to the States?

Brooklyn1943 - Korea --3 years, other countries usually 2 years

BearHug - They are willing to adopt older children

BearHug - for that very reason

Brooklyn1943 - Ethiopia has an escorting program as well

Brooklyn1943 - Escorts bring the kids to the US

inpa - How do the court proceedings work in the adoptee's birth country if you choose the escort option?

Brooklyn1943 - Funny you should ask, Jane and I were just discussing that

Brooklyn1943 - In Korea and India, child comes as ward of the US agency.

mikesmom - My guess would be with regards to the Tsumai orphans that there will be many families in their own country that will want to adopt. I read recently that there are people doing that already and some of the countries are trying to stop that since these children may have relatives who will take them in.

Brooklyn1943 - In Guatemala, child is adopted by adoptive parents while still in Guatemala, but can be escorted to US

Brooklyn1943 - It is really best to see child's host country

Brooklyn1943 - Mikesmom, I agree about Tsunami kids

monarchb - My step mother went to Guatemala to adopt my sister

monarchb - she claims she had a difficult time getting her out of the country

Brooklyn1943 - When you adopt a child from another country, it's your job to help child gain an appreciation of child's country and is difficult to do if you haven't been there

BearHug - I am very concerned about the Tsumai orphans and the fact that they are, in some cases, exploited

Brooklyn1943 - There are risks in international adoption

monarchb - My stepmother just brought my sister back there 15 years later for a wedding

monarchb - y sister loved it

monarchb - I think she really felt connected

Brooklyn1943 - Legal systems in other countries can cause delays or problems

monarchb - of course she enjoyed the benefits of money

Brooklyn1943 - Bear in mind I am typing info dictated by Jane until she can log on

BearHug - Monarchb, your sister is very fortunate

monarchb - That's what happened in Guatemala

Brooklyn1943 - I'm not sure what you mean about benefits of money

monarchb - Luckily my step mother knew the lawyer

mikesmom - IMy understanding is that children in parts of the country that had been hit by the tsunami already had problems with trafficking of children

BearHug - Can you clarify the risks of international adoptions

inpa - Oh, did your stepmother do a direct adoption?

Brooklyn1943 - Lack of full health info

monarchb - I think so

Brooklyn1943 - risk of country program shutting down or changing rules while you are in the middle of the process

monarchb - She chose to adopt from Guatemala because she has family there

Brooklyn1943 - being rejected by the government or adoption agency

monarchb - Trying to keep up with international law has to be complicated

Brooklyn1943 - Your agency should know the country well enough that shouldn;t happen

inpa - I have heard that Guatemala is the least restrictive requirements for adoption. My husband & I have been married less than a year & are both over 44.

Brooklyn1943 - It's important to look at the country and the agency

Brooklyn1943 - Does the country have a good legal system and clear process for adoption

BearHug - Thanks for that, I was just about to ask that question

BearHug - My cousin is only married a year

Brooklyn1943 - Jane says China might work for an "older" couple as well as Guatemala

BearHug - Both are medical Professionals

BearHug - Will keep that in mind as well.

Brooklyn1943 - If a couple has lived together for a period of time before marriage many agencies will consider that as time married

inpa - But China you have to go there & I don't think I can get there without flying!

Brooklyn1943 - No, I don't think you can get there without flying

BearHug - logged on. - using Mozilla/5.0 (Windows; U; Windows NT 5.1; en-US; rv:1.7.2) Gecko/20040804 Netscape/7.2 (ax) on 1/26 at 9:30pm CST)

inpa - Would my fear of flying be a problem in my homestudy?

**BearHug REMOTE_HOST(IP) - 138.89.163.62

Brooklyn1943 - Jane says: Your social worker will want to explore that with you

Brooklyn1943 - this is a good example of how you use a country

Brooklyn1943 - first look at eligibility issues

Brooklyn1943 - Then talk with other adoptive parents about their experiences

Brooklyn1943 - Learn about the culture of the country

monarchb - My step mother and father were in like 45 and 50 when they adopted my sister

mikesmom - In the case of inpa, could one spouse go to pick up the child if the other one could not for one reason or another?

Brooklyn1943 - It will be part of your life and if you don't like it, it will be a problem

monarchb - Jane your advice sounds similar to that which I give parents who adopt children from another race

Brooklyn1943 - Yes, one spouse can travel for most countries

monarchb - I think if you adopt outside of your race it is important to help your child feel comfortable with their race

John - logged on. - using Mozilla/4.0 (compatible; MSIE 6.0; Windows 98; AT&T CSM8.0) on 1/26 at 9:34pm CST)

Brooklyn1943 - Welcome John

**John REMOTE_HOST(IP) - 12.75.185.205

monarchb - No matter what country they're from

BearHug - Good advice

monarchb - It's important to incorporate their culture into your life

mikesmom - I would agree with monarchb, that whether you are adopting transracially or transculturally that it is important to keep the child's racial and cultural history in their life.

Brooklyn1943 - Most international adoptions are transracial or at least transcultural so the same issues you spoke of Monarch, apply

Brooklyn1943 - John, do you have a particular question for Jane?

monarchb - there's a lot of research that goes into adopting someone of another race or culture

Brooklyn1943 - Jane says: it's important to know what type of risk you are willing to take

Brooklyn1943 - If you are adopting from a program that does not have a long standing program, you may encounter some difficulties

inpa - How do you find an agency with a long standing program?

monarchb - You have to be prepared to tell the child the truth about the circumstances of their birth and adoption

Brooklyn1943 - Jane says: Look through agency listings and ask them how long they

Brooklyn1943 - worked in a particular country

John - logged off - using Mozilla/4.0 (compatible; MSIE 6.0; Windows 98; AT&T CSM8.0) on 1/26 at 9:40pm CST)

Brooklyn1943 - My own comment: join a support group and find out what other couples' experiences have been

monarchb - good advice

Brooklyn1943 - Each agency has different strengths.

Brooklyn1943 - You want an agency that is the right fit for you

mikesmom - It would seem that no matter whether you are adopting a child from another race or country one should do research in order to understand the cultural and racial needs of your child. Also to know yourself pretty well so that you can take on this responsibility.

monarchb - exactly

Brooklyn1943 - Jane says: Some do a wonderful job with finding a child, but don't have post placement servies

monarchb - your child will always feel different

monarchb - ven if they assimilate to the culture

inpa - I have noticed a post-adoption support group not too far from where I live. Would it be appropriate for me to join one of the meetings?

monarchb - I did

Brooklyn1943 - Others have a full range of services

BearHug - But they will be comfortable in their own skin, so to speak

monarchb - You hope

monarchb - I have heard white parents tell me that their young black child wishes they were puddinge

BearHug - Acknowledged

mikesmom - Well as parents, we always hope.

monarchb - white

Brooklyn1943 - Yes, you should try a support group, inpa

inpa - Even though it is post-adoption? I thought they might be willing to share their journey, but then I was afraid I would be intruding.

monarchb - Your extended family should be a support group for you as well

Brooklyn1943 - It's important that your child have mentors and others in his/her life who resemble them physically

monarchb - it is important that your parents and siblings are educated about the culture or race as well

Brooklyn1943 - Parents need to acknowledge it's hard being different

Brooklyn1943 - We can

Brooklyn1943 - We can't fix it for kids

monarchb - there's nothing more painful than to hear a racial slur from your adoptive family

monarchb - even if it's implied

Brooklyn1943 - You're right Monarchb, that is difficult

BearHug - Sad

Brooklyn1943 - Are there any other questions for Jane?

Brooklyn1943 - Inpa, Jane says, if you ask in a sensitive way, most adoptive parents are open to sharing their experiences

Brooklyn1943 - They were in your shoes a few years ago

inpa - Jane: Given my circumstances (married less than one year, over 44) would I be better off trying to adopt from Guatemala or doing open adoption in the US?

mikesmom - Well, I was wondering if Jane knew of a website that might have up to date information regarding international adoption, such as comparisons of what different countries require and how they handle adoptions.

monarchb - Where can one find a reliable source of international adoption agencies

Brooklyn1943 - Inpa, either one is an option. You need to consider the pros and cons of each choice and decide which is a better fit for you

Brooklyn1943 - A good place to start is Rainbow kids (check the NjARCH website it's listed as a link there)

Brooklyn1943 - JCICS (joint council on international children's concerns is a good source of agencies

Brooklyn1943 - Jane says there is no federal regulation of international adoption

Brooklyn1943 - In NJ agencies must be licensed and you can check with DYFS about complaints against any licensed agency

Brooklyn1943 - Someone who is licensed by NJ takes it seriously

Brooklyn1943 - Any other questions for Jane?

BearHug - Would these resources be valid in Alexandria, Va?

Brooklyn1943 - The state of VA licenses adoption agencies

Brooklyn1943 - Welcome House (Jane's Agency) is licensed in VA

mikesmom - Not from me, but thanks Jane for joining us.

Brooklyn1943 - The state Dept and the individual countries' embassies can be a source of info

BearHug - Good to know

inpa - Thanks Jane & Brooklyn1943 for relaying

BearHug - Thank you so much for an informative evening.

Brooklyn1943 - Jane says I am so sorry about the technical difficulties! Please don't hesitate to contact me directly at jcramer@pearl-s-buck.org or 215-249-0100 ext. 148 to talk about any of these topics in more depth.

inpa - logged off - using Mozilla/4.0 (compatible; MSIE 6.0; Windows NT 5.0; AT&T CSM8.0) on 1/26 at 9:57pm CST)

BearHug - logged off - using Mozilla/5.0 (Windows; U; Windows NT 5.1; en-US; rv:1.7.2) Gecko/20040804 Netscape/7.2 (ax) on 1/26 at 9:58pm CST)

mikesmom - Good night folks

monarchb - Thanks to everyone

mikesmom - logged off - using Mozilla/4.0 (compatible; MSIE 6.0; Windows NT 5.0; Q312461) on 1/26 at 9:59pm CST)

monarchb - Goodnight

monarchb - logged off - using Mozilla/5.0 (Windows; U; Windows NT 5.1; en-US; rv:1.7.2) Gecko/20040804 Netscape/7.2 (ax) on 1/26 at 10:00pm CST)

Brooklyn1943 - Good night and thanks for coming to our hosted chat