

“In their own words: Adult adoptees share their stories, share their lives”

Sunday, March 2, 2008

3-5 p.m.,

Location: Arvada United Methodist Church, 6750 Carr St., Arvada, CO 80004

Located on the corner of 68th and Carr, near the Arvada Center

RSVP to Tammy Brewer at 303-466-1140 or via email at brewercent@msn.com

Please join Colorado Families with Children from China for an exciting panel featuring the voices and experiences of four adult adoptees. Each panelist will first tell his or her own story. The remainder of the time will be devoted to questions from adoptive parents. Children are invited – we will have special activities for them. For questions and to RSVP, please contact Tammy Brewer at 303-466-1140 or via email at brewercent@msn.com.

Possible topics of interest parents might ask about:

Fostering positive sibling relationships, Dealing with extended family members, Handling questions from others, Racism, Cultural history (what and how do you choose to incorporate), Culture camps, Challenges with the school system/teachers, Gender differences/concerns, Learning the language, Teen years, Dating, Marriage, Family

Panelists:

Bert Ballard (Vu Tien Do II), Vietnamese adult adoptee

Elizabeth KimJin Collardey, PhD, LCSW, Korean adult adoptee

Melissa McKillip Vietnamese adult adoptee

Dehra Markson, Indian adult adoptee

Moderator, Beth Suter, PhD, adoptive mother

Bert Ballard (Vu Tien Do II) is a Vietnamese adoptee currently completing his PhD at the University of Denver in the Department of Human Communication Studies. He will be serving as an assistant professor at the University of Waterloo in Waterloo, Ontario this coming fall. While his primary focus is on communication ethics, he has been involved in conducting research on identity and international adoptive families with Dr. Beth Suter with the University of Denver. Bert is passionate about the adoptee voice and the adoptee community, having helped co-found two adoptee-led organizations, the Vietnamese Adoptee Network (VAN) and the International Adoptee Congress (IAC). He has also served on the board of directors for Colorado Heritage Camps, was a co-director for the 2007 Vietnamese Heritage Camp, and spoken on panels nationally and internationally for adoption conferences, adoption agencies, heritage camps, and professional training. With his wife, Sarah Ballard, Bert has been published in *Adoption Toolkit* and is an adoption educator for Chinese Children Adoption International (CCAI). He will be the upcoming keynote speaker for the first ever “Adopteen” conference for CCAI in July. Bert lives with his wife and two children, Adria (5) and Kyla (4), in Centennial, Colorado. His wife is a licensed professional counselor who specializes in international adoptees and adoptive families. They are awaiting a referral for their son from Vietnam.

Elizabeth KimJin Collardey is a Korean adoptee who earned both her MSW and PhD degrees from the University of Denver's Graduate School of Social Work. Her professional experience has included the fields of child protection, foster care, adoption, mental health, and community

development with immigrant and refugee families as well as having taught full-time in social work for 7 years. She has presented nationally on programmatic issues in international adoption as well as having published on the topic of global child labor. Elizabeth currently works as a clinical social worker in private practice serving adoptive families in Kittredge and is an adjunct faculty member at her alma mater. She lives with her soulmate, Tim, and their 3 beloved animal companions in Evergreen.

Melissa McKillip

Melissa McKillip comes from a very diverse family. She is one of six children, three of whom are adopted. There are eight grandchildren and two of them are adopted, too. Melissa was born in Vietnam and was adopted by a Caucasian American family in 1974. Her three sisters are the biological children of their parents. Melissa also has two brothers and they are adopted as well; one was born in Korea and the other was adopted domestically and is of Native American, Hispanic and French descent. Among the grandchildren are two adopted little girls; one is from China and the other is African-American. Adoption is very near and dear to Melissa's heart. She's been on the board of directors for Adoption Alliance for more than four years. Melissa joined the Johnson & Wales University team in 2006 and currently serves as the Director of Advancement Services. She coordinates the campus' fundraising activities with the different departments and the University-system. Melissa is also a staff adviser for the Class Legacy Project and Denver Family Association. She has been a development officer and events planner for higher education and nonprofits, like the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Special Olympics since 1996.

Dehra Markson

Dehra Markson was adopted from Calcutta, India when she was approximately four years old. She had two disrupted adoptions until she was finally adopted by the Marksons. She graduated from Knox College and currently works at a non profit adoption agency, Adoption Alliance.

Beth Suter is an assistant professor at the University of Denver in the Department of Human Communication Studies. Her research interests revolve around the identity formation of families, notably in lesbian and international adoptive families. Her latest work has focused on international adoptive families, with work being conducted on the importance of language in creating family identity, and how family identity can be challenged and/or supported by what others say. Beth has a daughter, Lilibet (4) from Jiangxi province in China, and lives with her spouse in Denver.