

LOVE FOR A LIFETIME

THE BARKER
ADOPTION
FOUNDATION



2016 ANNUAL REPORT

STEPHEN, NEVEAH, AALIYAH, AND AKISHA





ETHICAL
RESPECTFUL
CHILD-CENTERED

BUILDING FAMILIES
SINCE **1945**

MISSION FOCUSED

Our mission is to serve all members of the adoption circle – birth parents, adoptive parents, adopted persons and anyone else whose life is touched by adoption. We are an advocate for ethical, respectful and child-centered adoption practices.

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IN 2016,
WE PLACED **92 CHILDREN** WITH
PERMANENT, LOVING FAMILIES

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LETTER FROM THE LEADERSHIP



Each year it is a privilege and pleasure to send our Annual Report to the Barker community. In this year's report, you again have an opportunity to familiarize yourself with both the challenges and the achievements of the year just past. These challenges and opportunities have been met with spirit and dedication by our Board of Trustees and our Staff, as well as by our funders and the greater Barker community. Without our collective efforts, none of the year's achievements would have been possible.

We celebrated the homecoming of 92 children from newborns to older youth, from both the United States and from our international programs. Finding families for children who need them remains our primary mission, and once again, many children experienced the life-changing event of finding love and permanency with Barker families.



In the domestic infant department, our pregnancy counseling included strong outreach to communities of color, and we underscored our commitment to Latina women by employment of bilingual counselors. On the international front, we traveled to Colombia, China, and South Korea to meet with partner agencies and government officials, and we also sponsored another remarkable Homeland Tour to Colombia. We successfully achieved renewal of a four-year Hague accreditation, making clear our intent to maintain high standards in our international work. Our *Project Wait No Longer* program – which addresses the nationwide child welfare crisis – increasingly serves as a national model for public-private partnerships. Barker remains committed to becoming even more engaged in the world of foster care issues, and to that end, our staff made connections with many professionals all over the United States.

In all of the above programs, we not only placed children; we sought to sustain them. Post-adoption services remain a significant hallmark of Barker and too often are not available at many adoption agencies. In addition to the multitude of counseling needs we currently serve through post-adoption, Barker also now has nine after-hours support groups that are open to the adoption community.

We also invested in upgrading our technology and web-based presence, so that greater numbers could learn of the breadth and depth Barker's services. It is imperative that we continue to position ourselves and better communicate our commitment to ethical adoption in the internet universe.

Fundraising continues to be of supreme importance to our long-term sustainability. Your support of *Barker Goes Nats*, now an annual fund-raiser, and of the Annual Fund/Phonathon are tremendously encouraging. The strong growth of the endowment campaign: *Legacy II: The Next Generation*, surely gives us hope that the all-important mission of our agency endures, so that the gift of family will be possible for all the children and adults whom we serve in the decades to come. We hope to conclude Legacy II in 2018 and are very close to our goal. We certainly want to recognize and thank Allan and Shelley Holt for accelerating the full payment of their transformational pledge to 2016. We express profound gratitude for everyone's support and ask for your continued commitment in the coming year.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marilyn Regier".

Marilyn Regier
Executive Director & CEO

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John K. Freeman".

John K. Freeman
Chair, Board of Trustees

LOVE FOR A LIFETIME

HOW WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE



PREGNANCY SERVICES

We believe every woman deserves no-cost, compassionate care when experiencing an unplanned or crisis pregnancy. Whether a woman chooses to make an adoption plan or not, Barker social workers provide free counseling, support and help obtaining essential services to safeguard the health of mother and baby.



ADOPTION PROGRAMS

We help find the permanent, loving families children need to thrive. There are four paths to adoption at Barker:

Local. Matches are made with Maryland, Virginia or District of Columbia birth parents.

National. Families receive training, education and their home study through Barker, but match with birth parents elsewhere in the United States and complete the adoption through another agency or adoption attorney.

International. Barker's international adoption program includes China, Colombia, India and South Korea.

Independent. Receive training, home study preparation and support through Barker, but match with birth parents through individual outreach.



POST-ADOPTION SERVICES

Barker's services do not end at placement. We offer lifelong support to all members of the adoption circle whenever it is needed. Our post-adoption services are available to any person touched by adoption, even if Barker is not the placing agency.

THE BARKER FAMILY GREW EVEN BIGGER IN 2016!

Adam and Shalom welcomed Eliza
 Alfred and Daniel welcomed Grace
 Anuragh and Sapna welcomed Prabhu
 Barry and Michele welcomed Eric
 Bill and Angie welcomed Aaron
 BJ and Rachel welcomed Jacob
 Brian and Margaret welcomed Baylor
 Brian and Michelle welcomed Jackson
 Brian and Monica welcomed Madeline
 Brian and Raheleh welcomed Anis-Nur
 Brooks and Katie welcomed Andrew
 Carl and Laurie welcomed Nevaeh
 Carrie and Roberta welcomed Triston
 Chad and Vanessa welcomed James
 Charles and Bicky welcomed Evan
 Chris and Gina welcomed Ruby and Violet
 Chris and Jon welcomed Bowie
 Dave and Rachel welcomed Zachary
 David and Mark welcomed Lincoln
 David and Sarah welcomed Veronica
 Dean and Liz welcomed Samuel
 Erik and Emily welcomed Noa
 Erik and Lynn welcomed Li
 Evan and Jennifer welcomed Simon Guo
 Gabriel and Patricia welcomed Juan and Sara
 Gary and Shannon welcomed Chiara, Zuri,
 Kingston, and Stephen
 Geoff and Jenny welcomed Ava
 Greg welcomed Brannon

Heather welcomed Audrey
 Howard and Kathy welcomed Ellis
 Isaac and Andrea welcomed Eliana
 James and Hoshing welcomed Cheng Hui
 James and Marie welcomed Dorothy
 James and Rosario welcomed Joaquin
 Janet welcomed Sylvie
 Jeremy and Jan welcomed Joy
 Jim and Alisa welcomed Alexandra
 Jim and Amanda welcomed Addison
 Joel and Katy welcomed Bella
 Johnny and Michael welcomed Tyson
 Jurrien and Amanda welcomed Victoria
 Justin and Megan welcomed Aniya
 Kevin and Christine welcomed Matthew
 Kevin and Jane welcomed Ryan
 Kevin and Monica welcomed Daniela
 Kyle and Rachelle welcomed Ansel
 Manfred and Stacy welcomed Aden and
 Mason
 Maria welcomed Samuel
 Matt and Heidi welcomed Ailee
 Meredith welcomed Rebecca Lan Lan
 Michael and Brook welcomed Olivia
 Mike and Jen welcomed Jack
 Mike and Jenny welcomed Jae
 Mike and Julia welcomed Roman
 MJ and Colleen welcomed Alana
 Nathan and Theresa welcomed Jayu

Norm and Kara welcomed Ethan
 Peter and Diana welcomed Samuel
 Philip and Devin welcomed Frankie
 Rajiv and Komal welcomed Samrudhi
 Rich and Karen welcomed Veronica
 Richard and Natalie welcomed Eva
 Rob and Jennifer welcomed Nathan
 Rob and Kim welcomed Jacob
 Ryan and Aparna welcomed Kailash
 Sarah and Nicole welcomed Mason
 Sergio and Allison welcomed William
 Shane and Juliet welcomed Miles
 Sioban and Rochelle welcomed Julia
 Stacey welcomed Whitman
 Stephen and Akisha welcomed Neveah
 Steve and Eileen welcomed May
 Steve and Ish welcomed Juniper Dulari
 Steve and Patti welcomed Maggie
 Steve and Nora welcomed Audrey
 Steven and Sonia welcomed Andrew
 Susan welcomed Marta
 Tayo and Tracy welcomed Evelin and Davith
 Thoko and Jori welcomed Savannah
 Thomas and EunHwa welcomed Jina
 Timothy and Jennifer welcomed Rachel
 Trekker and Becky welcomed Wren
 Vinoo and Smriti welcomed Rohan
 Willie and Jade welcomed Mariella



BUILDING FAMILIES AND CHANGING LIVES

TEN IMPORTANT THINGS WE ACCOMPLISHED IN 2016 THANKS TO YOUR SUPPORT!

We placed 92 children with permanent, loving families.

This included 38 infants through our domestic adoption program, 14 older children through the U.S. public foster care system/Project Wait No Longer, and 40 children through our international program. International placements included children from China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of Congo, India, South Korea, and Taiwan.

We celebrated 70 years of family-building.

More than 350 friends and family members attended Barker's 70th anniversary at a benefit gala at the National Museum of Women in the Arts. There they honored our seven decades of providing ethical life-long services to all members of the adoption community.

We provided counseling for 110 pregnant women, their partners and other family members.

There is no "typical" birth parent and as such there's no cookie-cutter approach to helping a birth parent consider her options. Barker works with each woman and family individually, tailoring a resource plan to meet their specific needs.

We offered nine monthly support groups for birth parents, adoptees and adoptive parents.

These groups are open to the entire adoption community and not just those previously involved with Barker.

We created new training for individuals seeking to adopt through our international program.

The program focuses on the needs of children coming from institutional care or foster care in other countries.

We hosted a series of successful kids groups.

Over 30 adopted children shared their experiences in a nurturing and safe environment. Barker facilitators use games and art projects to help children explore and express their thoughts around adoption.

We engaged adopted teens.

Our Teen Weekend gave adopted teens the chance to have fun, surround themselves with other adopted youth and share their feelings about being adopted. The event reflected Barker's diversity, with teens from our domestic, international and Project Wait No Longer programs in attendance. Facilitating staff also included adopted persons.

We increased community knowledge and expertise around adoption.

Barker staff led multiple in-service workshops for school professionals, clinics and hospitals, including The Lab School, Commonwealth Academy, American University and Prince George's Hospital Center.

We hosted our 22nd Annual Adoption and Foster Care Conference.

More than 300 attendees, including adopted persons, adoptive parents, birth parents and adoption professionals, participated in this inspiring and educational event.

We joined together.

Numerous events brought Barker families together throughout the year, including the annual Barker picnic, a Hispanic Heritage Celebration, National Adoption Month activities, a book club, and the Fourth Annual Barker Day At Nationals Park. Thanks to the generosity of many, the latter event raised nearly \$70,000 in support of vital programs, including pregnancy counseling, PWNL and post-adoption services.

LOVE STORIES

BROOKS AND ANDREW



OPEN MINDS AND OPEN HEARTS

BROOKS, KATIE AND ANDREW

When Brooks and Katie decided to adopt a child, they knew it might stir up some emotion – Brooks had been adopted himself 36 years earlier. Even so, they could not have predicted where their path would take them.

Brooks and Katie knew from the start that they wanted to adopt. “I had the most wonderful parents. Why not pay it forward?” Brooks says. They were also clear about what they wanted from the process. “We wanted to adopt an infant and we wanted to work with an agency whose mission put children first. Our cousin’s best friend had adopted through Barker and recommended it to us. We loved how Barker advocated for the child and knew we wanted to work with them,” Katie explains.

Open vs. Closed Adoption

The couple joined Barker’s domestic infant adoption program. As they moved through process, the couple had to consider how they felt about contact with birth parents after adoption.

Both Brooks and his younger brother had been adopted at a time when adoptions were almost always closed. “Growing up, our family was always very open and transparent about adoption. Still, my parents had very limited information about my birth parents so I didn’t really know much. I thought closed adoption was normal.”

“However, after learning more about open adoptions at Barker’s Waiting Parent meetings and hearing from others about their experiences, we knew that open adoption was the way to go,” he says.

A Joyful Arrival

While waiting can be agony for prospective parents as they hope birth parents will see their materials and express interest in them, once that happens, things can sometimes move at lightning speed, which is exactly what happened to Brooks and Katie.

“On a Saturday in October, we had a call from an agency representing a birth mother in Georgia who had seen our book and wanted to meet us. We talked to her on Sunday and I flew down to meet her in person and attend a doctor appointment with her on Wednesday,” Katie recounts.

Six days later, Katie, back in Maryland, received another call. The birth mother had visited the doctor again and she was

going to be induced the very next day. Would Katie and Brooks come? Katie and Brooks, who had just landed at the airport from a business trip, got into their car and drove through the night to Georgia, where they went straight to the hospital. Katie went to the delivery room for the birth, while Brooks waited in a room next door. Brooks was brought in immediately after the birth of a healthy baby boy. The couple named their child, Andrew, after Katie’s grandfather.

Unexpected Delivery

While living with a newborn can itself be its own adventure, the family was about to get more life-changing news. On the Saturday after Andrew’s first Thanksgiving, the postman knocked at the door, delivering a certified letter for Brooks. Puzzled, Brooks checked the return address – Catholic Charities, the agency through which he had been adopted nearly four decades ago.

Inside, a letter explained the agency was acting as an intermediary for someone trying to find an individual named Brooks who had been born on a certain day. If he was the Brooks in question, the letter said, and he was interested in learning more, he was invited to contact Catholic Charities for additional information.

Brooks called Catholic Charities on Monday. “At most, I was thinking that maybe a half-sibling or a cousin was looking for me,” he says. What he learned stunned him. His birthmother was interested in speaking. Would he be open to talking?

Without hesitation, Brooks said yes and provided his cellphone number. Within minutes, he was having his first conversation with Mickey, his birthmother.

Another Surprise

Mickey and Brooks talked for almost two hours that day. Mickey shared that she had married someone shortly after she placed Brooks for adoption and he has three half-siblings. Brooks told her about Katie, his parents, his brother, and his amazing new child, Andrew.

Mickey asked Brooks if he or his parents had ever seen his original birth certificate. None of them had. Brooks had been six weeks old at the time of his placement and a new birth certificate had been issued for him as Brooks. His original birth certificate, Mickey told him, had borne a different

first name – Andrew, the name that he had just given to his son.

Expanded Family

Over the next months, Brooks and Mickey continued their conversation by phone and text and eventually planned a family visit in Philadelphia. Brooks, Katie and Andrew met Mickey’s husband, two daughters and a cousin. “Her husband has known about me from the start and the kids learned about me later,” Brooks recalls. “Everyone wanted to be there.”



Brooks, Katie and Andrew

At first, Brooks and Katie thought the reunion might be for closure, but now they see it as an expansion of their family. They are still feeling their way, but welcome the addition of what they describe as “very fun” people into their lives. For now, Mickey texts Brooks every Friday to inquire about his week, just as she does for her other three children.

“When we started the adoption process for Andrew, it would occasionally pique my interest in searching. I’m glad Mickey reached out.”

Brooks says that when he thinks about Andrew and his son’s birth mother, “I’m very hopeful that he will have that relationship one day.” In the meantime, he couldn’t be any more in love with his baby, who will soon turn one:

“I can’t express how emotional and amazing it is. Katie could have given birth to him and it wouldn’t have been any different. He is our baby. We just loved him instantly.”

EVERY CHILD IS SPECIAL

EVAN, JENNIFER AND SIMON

Enter the home of this new Barker family on a Saturday morning and you'll be greeted by a sweet, adorable and exuberant little boy named Simon and his parents, Jennifer and Evan. Simon eagerly shows off a prized dinosaur and introduces his visitor to one of the family's beloved cats. Alternating between bursts of activity, conversations with mom and snuggles with dad, Simon is the picture of a happy, healthy and much-loved four-year-old.

Jennifer and Evan, a warm and friendly couple, clearly revel in the joy that Simon brings them. Whether it's discussing a favorite family movie or reminiscing about their early days together in China, it's clear the bonds among the three run deep.

Twists and Turns

Their journey to becoming a family had some twists and turns. When Jennifer and Evan first considered adoption, they envisioned adopting a young child through the U.S. foster care system. "We didn't want to adopt an infant, but knew we weren't ready to adopt a much older child," Jennifer explains.

The couple attended adoption information sessions in the county where they lived and also spoke with several private agencies. The answer each time was the same – most children in need of families in their area would be aged 10 or older, while they hoped to become parents of a younger child.

Focused on Ethics

A job relocation meant a move to Maryland, where research led them to Barker's domestic infant adoption program. Jennifer said they were drawn to the Barker staff's ethical standards and their unflagging commitment to doing what is best for everyone involved. "We felt very safe with the director of the domestic program, and trusted her instantly. We liked how she and the Barker team valued birth mothers and how they really focused on the kids. We trusted that she would not put us in a situation where the birth mother would later regret her decision."

"At one point, we went to a Waiting Parents meeting and learned more about the partnerships that Barker has with other private adoption agencies. We talked to other agencies to help us increase the number of birth mothers who might see our profile, but we couldn't find any that

matched the expectations that Barker had set for us. No one else delivered around ethics like Barker did," Evan says.

An Alternate Path

The couple went through the typical process of creating a book about themselves and building a website. On the day they created postcards to begin sending out, they received an email from Barker that stopped them in their tracks. There was a two-year-old boy in China who needed a family – would they be interested in learning more about him? The Barker staff had recalled their longing to adopt a toddler and had thought of them when the child's file arrived.

The email contained some information about the child, including what might have been a dealbreaker for some – the child had been diagnosed with hemophilia, a disorder in which blood does not properly clot. While they didn't overlook that fact, Jennifer and Evan's initial focus was completely different: "Did you see his little feet?" one asked, to which the other replied, "Yes! Is it just me or are those the cutest feet ever?"

Weighing the Commitment

Still, no matter how adorable the child might be, the couple knew they needed to be comfortable with his hemophilia diagnosis if they were to be his parents. Neither Jennifer nor Evan knew much about the condition, just remembering vague snippets from a high school history class about its prevalence among European royalty.

As Jennifer describes it, the couple embarked on a weekend "cram session" and attempted to learn as much as they could about the condition itself and what it's like to parent a child with hemophilia. "Hemophilia sounded big, maybe too big. We wondered if it would be too much for us to handle." They searched the Internet, read the latest research and found a blog written by a woman who had adopted a child with hemophilia from China just a year earlier.

A Treatable Condition

"We saw a lot of scary stuff, but there was a lot of good news right away too. Treatment has improved dramatically over the past thirty years. Today, children who begin receiving regular treatment as toddlers can expect a normal life span and a high quality of life. Many people with hemophilia use medication that was created in a lab and doesn't rely on any blood product, thus



eliminating the risk of infection. Screening of blood donations has improved as well, so those who use blood products are also much safer than they were in the 1980's."

In the end, despite Jennifer's fear of needles (she had passed out more than once while donating blood) they decided to go for it. "If I had given birth to a son with hemophilia, I'd have learned to be a good hemophilia mom. I'd have gotten past my own 'things' in order to take care of my son. I could do the same for this son."

The couple officially switched to Barker's China Waiting Children Program and within a month received pre-approval to become the parents of the little boy whom they would name Simon. Six months later, they were in China, ready to bring Simon home. "We weren't sure what to expect. We'd been told Simon was afraid of tall people and that he could be a bit shy," Jennifer says.



Bonds from the Start

Reality proved completely different. “Almost immediately after seeing Evan, he was asking Evan to pick him up and that was it. He was glued to Evan from that moment on. He came into the lobby and met us and I pulled out the book we had sent to him and he started saying ‘mine, mine, mine’ and touching pictures. He pointed to each of us in the photos and then kissed us on the cheeks. We also gave him a lollipop, which is *his* favorite part of the story,” Jennifer says with a laugh.

Ensuring Medical Stability

After arriving in the United States, Simon’s world quickly expanded as he met his twin cousins and others who immediately welcomed Simon to the family. He also had to cope with his first medical episode following a blood draw at the pediatrician’s office. “We wound up in the Emergency

Room and they started medicine right away, but his body rejected it. They tried immunotherapy next. There’s nothing more terrifying than someone taking your baby who doesn’t clot into surgery!” Jennifer says.

Immunotherapy has worked well for Simon and he receives ten-minute infusions at home every other day. Outside of that, Simon’s day is full of curiosity and fun right from the start. “He comes into our room in the morning and starts talking about who we will be that day. Today I’m an ambulance and Jennifer is a princess,” Evan says, as Simon nods in agreement.

Joy-Filled Days

When they aren’t running, sliding and pretending to be dinosaurs at the park, the trio often spends time with other families with children born in the same province as Simon. “When someone brings a child home

from a Guanxi orphanage, we connect them to our group. Some families have pictures of their kids celebrating their birthday in the orphanage together and now they are celebrating birthdays together here,” Jennifer says. The group has a Facebook page and holds annual gatherings that have included picnics and a trip to a Pennsylvania amusement park.

The family also remains connected to Barker. “We try to be part of as many Barker events as we can. This year, we went to the picnic and the international potluck, and we have plans to go to a Nationals’ game,” Evan says.

In the end, Jennifer sums their story up perfectly: “Our everyday life isn’t about adoption or hemophilia. It’s about being a family.”

A MENTOR AND A FRIEND

CHARMAYNE ANDERSON



Charmayne

CONNECT, Barker's Project Wait No Longer (PWNL) mentor program pairs adult mentors who have an adoption or foster care history with youth who have recently been placed for adoption. The goal is to empower adoptees to build friendships and self-confidence and to help them better understand and process their life experiences and goals.

What led you to mentoring a newly adopted teen through the CONNECT program?

It is important to me to give back to my community and I wanted to find a cause to support that meant something to me on a personal level. Both my sister and I were adopted and I wanted to see if there was something I could do in the world of adoption.

I researched agencies and came across Barker. I liked their programming and spoke at their parenting workshops, sharing my perspective as an adoptee and as someone who has met her birth family.

Becoming a mentor for an older child appealed to me because my sister had lived through child abuse and foster care before coming to our family. While I didn't come from the same traumatic background, I saw how it affected her as a child through adulthood as well as the impact it had on our family. I thought I might have something to offer a teen coming out of similar circumstances.

What type of relationship do you have with your mentee?

I think she looks to me for support and guidance. I'm a bit like a cheerleader, operating in the space between her social workers and others in her village. I offer an ear to listen and a shoulder to lean on. She is 16 years old now. She joined her parents at 14 years old and lived with them for over a year before finalizing her adoption. Prior to that, she was in foster care for three or four years. She had been moving around since she was 10.

How did you prepare for this role?

I met with Barker staff and with her parents first so I could learn about her through her parents' eyes. I also participated in Barker's training sessions on becoming a mentor.

How has your relationship with your mentee developed?

Our first meeting was over lunch with the two of us and her social worker. She's an older teenager so she had her teenage guard up. The good news is she was willing to talk as long as it wasn't about her adoption or her past, so that gave us a chance to get over other things and allow her time to open up.

Since then, we've had lunch, dinner, watched a movie, painted pottery. We've now talked quite a bit about her life story, her upbringing, her schooling, friends, her outlook on life, and whether she wants to pursue higher education. We've spent time talking about her friendship choices and her schooling choices and whether they are serving her well. It seems to work well to do an activity and have a conversation around that activity.

What are your hopes as a mentor?

I want to be a friend, even though I have teenagers of my own and sometimes it would be easy to respond like a parent. I've learned to be a listener in the process, and to find ways to give her perspective and to make her laugh.

It's also important to me to promote her resiliency. I want her to know that while she might have setbacks, she will always have a way to recover. My sister didn't have that resiliency and couldn't get back up once she started to fall down. She died too young as a result, and I want to share as much as I can and show that it doesn't have to be that way.

I also want to help her set goals and identify her dreams. Right now, she is learning that she has different kinds of friends and that some lead lives she knows she doesn't want to be part of. Part of our conversations focus on helping her see that she can have more than her prior life was offering her. I saw with my sister that no matter how much love there was, her backstory kept bleeding in and I want to help her focus on what's positive in her life and what she can do. I want her to be able to say: "I have more to my story. I can overcome."

Right now, it seems she has a great outlook on life and her future. Her parents are exposing her to a lot of opportunities and I look forward to our continued relationship so we can learn from each other.

FLASHING BACK AND MOVING FORWARD

MIKE, BETH, SAM AND ANABEL

In our 2013 Annual Report, we shared the Dame family's very special story. Four years after adopting their son Sam from Colombia, Mike and Bethany Dame had been matched with a birth mother in Florida. When Mike, Bethany and Sam flew to Florida to participate in the baby's birth, they didn't know that significant medical issues had gone undetected in utero. After birth, the doctors delivered heartbreaking news – the baby's diaphragm did not develop properly and her small intestines and stomach, now located in her chest cavity, were compressing her lungs. With a 30%-40% survival rate for this condition, her life was at risk.

Soon after came the moment when Mike faced down the doctor who suggested the Dames reconsider adopting the baby, whom they had already named Anabel. "We are her family. She's our daughter. There's no turning back for us."

When we featured the Dames in our 2013 report, Sam was an energetic almost five-year-old who delighted in showing off his sister and playing on his backyard slide. Anabel, at 15 months, had an infectious smile and mischievous glint in her eye as she scanned the room to see what she could get into next, unbowed by several surgeries and near constant doctor and therapy visits.

Recently, we checked in with the Dames to see how things are going for what they proudly called their "forever family."

"It's been quite a journey the past couple of years for Anabel and our family," Bethany says. "Anabel is now four and has had seven surgeries in her short life. I think the last time we talked, she was preparing for open heart surgery, which was successful. In 2016, she was hospitalized a few times between January and May, including her third birthday, because her lung disease made her susceptible to pneumonia, which she had for six months that winter. She was able to beat it though, and we've found a better way to manage her lung disease, making it easier to maintain our normal routines and keep Anabel out of the hospital following common colds."

That routine includes making sure Sam, who is now 8 years old, feels nurtured and loved too. "One of our biggest challenges has been learning how to keep things normal for Sam. It can take its toll to have attention always diverted to Anabel. Sam may not have what would be called 'special medical

needs,' but he has everyday "little boy" needs and we've spent time learning how we can meet those too. One thing that's helped is that Bethany and I try to take turns doing something special with him for a few minutes each night to make sure he feels he is important and loved," Mike says.

Birth Family Connections

The Dames have kept up their relationship with Anabel's birth mother and half-brother, a relationship that brings joy to both Anabel and Sam. "We visit them once a year and Sam considers Anabel's half-brother to be his brother too. He loves spending time with him. Anabel and her birth mother are mirror images of each other and Anabel loves her and her half-brother so much," Mike relays.

Mike says this, too, has required reflection to be supportive of Sam, as he has minimal information about his birth parents in Colombia. "The relationship we all have with Anabel's birth family is wonderful, but it's also hard because we can't offer the same thing to Sam. When he's ready, we will take him to Colombia on Barker's homeland tour so he can see his file and if he wants to, we will do everything we can to help him find his birth parents."

Sibling Bonds

This fall, Anabel will enter pre-K and Sam will begin third grade. When not in school, they take part in all of the activities enjoyed by typical 4- and 8-year-olds. "You'd never know any of Anabel's medical history by looking at her. She keeps up with everyone. You can tell she has an older brother – her preference is to be rough and tumble," Bethany says. Both Sam and Anabel recently received new bikes and this summer they've spent a lot of time riding their bikes, playing on swings, and swimming at the neighborhood pool. Anabel's favorite sport is gymnastics, while Sam prefers soccer.

Lest anyone think that the attention on Anabel has caused resentment between the two siblings, that's far from true. "Their bond is so strong. He loves to boss her around and do big brother things and Anabel can give it right back. It's incredible to see how much they love each other," Mike says.

The support they've received from their community has been phenomenal. "We've always had a very supportive family," Bethany notes, "and our neighborhood and school have been amazing as well. When



Sam and Anabel from the 2013 Barker Foundation Annual Report

Anabel is hospitalized, even the school principal calls, and the school counselor will stop by the classroom to check on Sam."

Medical Outlook

Fingers crossed, the family doesn't see anything medical on the immediate horizon for Anabel. "We have appointments with specialists every three to six months, but generally, we try not to worry about what might be on the horizon for her medically and stay in the moment. I have a quote someone gave me that I keep above our kitchen sink: 'Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass. It's about learning to dance in the rain.' We just keep going and try to appreciate what we have right here, right now."

Meant To Be

"I often get the comment, "I don't think I could do that," when someone hears our story. My answer to that is, "You know, you could. If it was your biological child, you would parent them. We wouldn't have done anything differently. You always have to be open to whoever your child will be because you don't know."

"We were meant to be a family. Meant to be together. As hard as it may be to juggle Anabel's medical care and to be the best parents we can to Anabel and Sam, this was the road we were meant to go down. Anabel and Sam continue to teach us a lot about life and being grateful."

BRINGING A FAMILY TOGETHER

ZAC AND RYAN

Our walk down memory lane wouldn't be complete without an update on Ryan and Zac, twins featured in our 2012 Annual Report. Born prematurely – one at home and one on the way to the hospital – the twins were immediately placed for adoption by a birthmother who had only one request. She wanted the twins to be kept together in their forever family.

The hospital contacted Barker for help with the newborns and the Barker team swung into action. Jim and Genie, two volunteers on Barker's Cradle Care team, which provides foster care to babies in transition, quickly agreed to serve as temporary parents while the babies were medically stabilized and a permanent, loving home for them could be found.

Jim and Genie spent months at the hospital, cradling the babies skin-to-skin against their chests to give them the critical "kangaroo" care that experts say stimulates physiological and psychological bonding in pre-term infants. While Zac was given a clean bill of health, Ryan was diagnosed with significant medical needs due to oxygen deprivation at his birth, including cerebral palsy.

After a nationwide search, the Barker team found Gary and Crystal, a Montana couple who had the resources, skills and desire to meet both babies' needs. Parents to 15 children, 10 of whom had been adopted, they welcomed not only Ryan and Zac with open arms, but also Jim and Genie, who have lasting bonds with the entire family.

Today, both Ryan and Zac are thriving in their family and their family is thriving with them. Crystal describes Zac as an active and empathetic five-year-old who loves whales and turtles. He's a trivia buff – he loves to learn random facts and share them – and he has a soft spot for cars and trains.

Twin Bonds

He also has a soft spot for his twin. "They are very, very close," Crystal says. "Ryan let's Zac get away with things that he objects to from others, and Zac just assumes Ryan will go with him wherever he goes. He always makes sure Ryan is included in whatever he is."

While Ryan can't engage in everything Zac can given his very limited mobility, his personality shines through even from the sidelines. "We always say how funny he is and because he's non-verbal, people will ask, 'How can you tell?' If you know him, you



know he's being funny or playful," Crystal says. "When he hears or sees something humorous, his lip turns up and he gives a little snort. He will stick his tongue out to be impish and make a grab for someone's glasses and then smile and laugh."

"Ryan loves being around other children his age, and he went to preschool this past year with a private nurse. He watches the other kids and enjoys story time. We are working now with a company that helps him use a computer to communicate. He's picking it up very quickly. He's very opinionated – if given two choices he doesn't like, he'll turn his head," Crystal says with a laugh.

The family moved to Colorado last year to be closer to a children's medical center and more pediatric specialists. Ryan receives treatment for a constellation of conditions, including a form of epilepsy and a digestive disorder. Still, Crystal says, "we can do the same things we used to do before the twins came and it really hasn't slowed us down. The things that we were afraid of at the beginning haven't really been that overwhelming."

Unifying Forces

In fact, if you speak with Crystal for awhile, she'll tell you that the changes the twins brought to their family have been overwhelmingly positive.

"Most of our kids were teenagers and young adults when we brought Ryan and Zac home. Like any kids their ages, they were starting to spread their wings and scatter

a bit, and family ties weren't always their priority. The arrival of the boys was unifying. They've cemented everyone together. Even our rougher, grittier boys can be seen sharing tender moments with Ryan. One said just the other day, 'I don't know what it is, but I just love Ryan.'"

When Ryan needed 24/7 care and there weren't enough nurses in their area to provide it, one son started staying with Ryan one night per week. A daughter became a Certified Nursing Assistant so she could help more deeply with his care. Basking in all of this love, "Ryan goes nuts when he hears his siblings' voices on the phone," Crystal says.

Lifetime Love

He is similarly excited when he learns it's his former caregivers Genie and Jim calling. The couple is so close to the family that everyone calls them Grandma Genie and Grandpa Jim. "Even our older children who are not adopted consider Jim and Genie to be grandparents. At least seven of our kids have traveled to Maryland to stay with them and they have spent considerable time here with us. Zac recently visited Jim and Genie on his own with our oldest daughter and came back totally spoiled," she notes with a smile.

"Zac and Ryan are the glue that holds our family together. They keep us all linked and all we can say is that their arrival in our family has been nothing but very, very positive," Crystal reflects.

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ANNE AND PAUL EGGERS

What does it take to support an organization like Barker? Time, treasure and talent.

For nearly four decades, Anne and Paul Eggers have given all three to Barker in ways too numerous to count. From chairing the auction to serving on the Board of Trustees, fostering babies to supporting our endowment campaign, the couple have been steadfast supporters of Barker and our mission.

Adoptive Parents

Anne and Paul first joined the Barker community as adoptive parents 38 years ago. Their son, Jeff, came first. Judy followed three years later, again through Barker, and Steven made them a family of five when he arrived as a surprise biological child just as they began the paperwork for a third adoption.

Shortly after Stephen's birth, Anne and Paul were reminded about the unintentional ways children absorb information about adoption. "We were coming home from a Cub Scout meeting and we heard Jeff explaining to a friend in the car that he had a new baby brother, but "we won't have him much longer." When we asked him later that night what he meant, he said, "I thought that because we love him so much, it means he'll be adopted."

Extraordinary Volunteers

Anne and Paul had been active volunteers at Barker from the start. Anne made a quilt for the auction in their very first year after adopting Jeff, and it wasn't long before she was serving as an auction chair. They fondly recall Paul baking homemade bread as one of the delicious auction items on offer. "We delivered four loaves a month to the lucky winner, piling the kids in the car to go deliver it." Anne also served on the Board of Trustees, dedicating time and energy to helping Barker live its mission, and received the Barker Award for exemplary service in 1988.



Fabulous Foster Parenting

The couple still wasn't done lending their support. In 1990, they became foster parents. "Our kids were 10, 7 and 4, when we began, and we thought it was a great way to show them how to give back. We all loved babies and over five years, we had approximately 20 infants entrusted to us. It was rewarding and it also underscored that Barker was always committed to doing things right with compassion for all parties," Paul says.

Friendship and Financial Support

Anne says their active engagement led to deep friendships with other Barker families that carry over to today. They also continue to lend financial support, participating in the annual phon-a-thon each September, attending the anniversary galas and contributing to the endowment campaign. "We keep up with it as much as we can as a measure of thanks for what's happened over the past 38 years and to help the other families move forward," Anne says.

The Next Generation

The family is grateful for Barker's full complement of services, including post-adoption support that is available to anyone touched by adoption. Varda Makovsky, director of post-adoption services, helped Jeff search for his biological family. While his birth parents had both died, he found a sister who has become part of their family. "She grew up always knowing she had an older brother. She has children, so Jeff became an instant uncle. She joins our family for holidays and birthdays. It's nice to see them together," Anne says.

Jeff, for his part, seems to have inherited his parents' penchant for giving back, serving on a Barker conference panel to talk about his search. This was a happy moment for Anne and Paul who have given Barker so much. "We hope all of our children will want to stay connected to Barker, even as adults."

2016 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The Barker Adoption Foundation completed the year with an increase in net assets of \$15,380. This was a great improvement over 2015, when extensive flooding of our office space had a significant negative impact on the Foundation's finances. After completion of extensive repairs, we were able to move back to our first floor offices in June 2016, and operations could return to normal after the disruption caused by the flood and office relocation. Negotiations with the insurance company resulted in Barker recovering all of its out-of-pocket expenditures plus some of the losses in revenue that resulted from the impact of the flood.

Special events held in 2016 played a major fundraising role, including the *Barker Goes Nats* annual baseball fund-raiser. The Benefit Gala held in honor of our 70th Anniversary brought the Barker community

together to celebrate the organization whose lifelong support has impacted so many lives. Net Gala revenue supported the Friends of Barker Legacy II Endowment Campaign.

The Friends of Barker endowment campaign *Legacy II: The Next Generation* continued its growth, with 2016 Contributions reaching \$1.7M. Along with the Gala proceeds and donor pledges, the matching of donations by a generous Barker family brought the campaign to within 85% of its fundraising goal of \$3.5M. It is hoped that the remaining \$518K will be raised by 2018 to draw the Campaign to a successful conclusion.

The Legacy II Endowment Campaign funds provide the financial security to ensure Barker's ability to continue its important leadership role in the adoption community

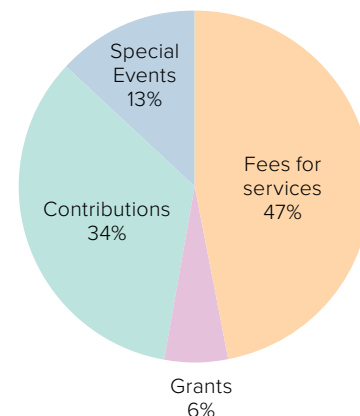
and serve our families long into the future. A percentage of the investment income from the endowment funds are distributed semi-annually to the Foundation to help support Barker's operations. In 2016, the amount contributed to Barker was \$301,959.

Almost half of Barker's operating costs were covered by the fees we charge for our services in 2016. Continued generosity from our donors is crucial to cover the balance of the operating costs. With 83% of Barker's spending going directly to program services, contributors can count on their donations making a difference in the lives of those we serve. Donations to the Foundation and the financial security gained from the Friends of Barker endowment campaigns will enable Barker to continue to provide its comprehensive, lifelong adoption services for many years to come.

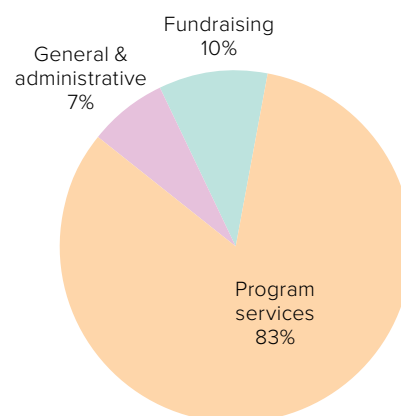
Consolidated Statement of Activities

Year Ended December 31, 2016	The Barker Adoption Foundation	Friends of Barker, Inc.	Total
SUPPORT AND REVENUE			
Fees for services	\$ 1,197,454		\$ 1,197,454
Grants	162,500		162,500
Contributions	874,675	\$ 1,700,511	2,575,186
Special Events	345,716		345,716
Revenue	2,580,345	1,700,511	4,280,856
Investment income net of fees	1,524	1,027,987	1,029,511
Friends of Barker Contribution to Barker	301,959	(301,959)	–
Gala Revenue to Friends of Barker	(140,200)	140,200	–
Other	50,773	–	50,773
Total Revenue	2,794,401	2,566,739	5,361,140
EXPENSES			
Program services	2,318,228	–	2,318,228
General & administrative	184,726	4,712	189,438
Fundraising	276,067	–	276,067
Total Expenses	2,779,021	4,712	2,783,733
Change in Net Assets	15,380	2,562,027	2,577,407
Net Assets – beginning of year	418,977	7,921,435	8,340,412
Net Assets – end of year	\$ 434,357	\$10,483,462	\$10,917,819

The Barker Adoption Foundation Revenue



The Barker Adoption Foundation Expenses



MAKE A GIFT. MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Help more children find the permanent, loving families each deserves by supporting our work.

Ways to help include:

- Direct Donations
- Workplace Giving
- In-Kind Giving
- Honor/Memorial Gifts
- Planned Giving
- Volunteer Service

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To make a gift or for more information, go to:
www.barkeradoptionfoundation.org

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Priorities on the horizon include:

- Significantly increase the number of adoptive parents open to adopting children with special needs
- Increase awareness of Barker's post-adoption services, including our support groups, counseling and educational workshops
- Additional outreach services for those experiencing an unplanned pregnancy
- Completion of Legacy II, our endowment campaign to create a substantial and protected financial base that will keep us strong and vital.
- Expand CONNECT, our new Project Wait No Longer mentor program





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Accreditations and Affiliations

The Barker Adoption Foundation is licensed in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. The agency is Hague-accredited through the Council on Accreditation (COA) and a member of the National Council for Adoption, Local Independent Charities, the Maryland Coalition for Adoption, the Maryland Association of Non-Profit Organizations, the North American Council on Adoptable Children, and the Virginia Association of Licensed Child Placing Agencies. Featured in the 2017/2018 Catalogue for Philanthropy. "One of the best small charities in the Greater Washington Region."



Photographs courtesy of Barker families and Barker staff. Annual Report written by Maureen Minehan. Design by Havit Advertising. Printing by HBP, Inc.

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