



**CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS**  
**37<sup>th</sup> Annual Child Welfare Symposium**  
**Monday, May 20, 2013 -Wednesday May 22,**

**TITLE OF PRESENTATION:** Standards of Best Practice for Adoptive Parents: Ethics, Economics, and Responsibilities

**TOPIC IS GEARED TOWARD ADVANCED OR BASIC LEVEL?** (List one.) Basic

**PRESENTER(S):**

Main Presenter Name (including honorary titles): Maureen McCauley Evans

Organization:

Complete Address: 12035 Pinehurst Way NE Seattle, WA 98125

Phone: 202-253-4292

Fax:

Email: Maureen.emccauley@gmail.com

Additional Presenter Name (including honorary titles):

Organization:

Complete Address:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

**PRESENTATION TYPE** (choose all that apply):

Medical and Nutritional Institute

Organizational Development

Orphan Care

Intercountry Adoption

Country Specific:

Haiti

Ethiopia

India

China

**BRIEF SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION:** Please provide a brief (no longer than 50 words) summary in the space below; this description will help Joint Council shape Symposium publications.

After placement, what responsibilities (if any) do adoptive parents have to the country of origin and to the birth family? Much informal connection is occurring, without oversight or evaluation. Are birth families, adoptees, future adoptees, and countries of origin being helped or harmed?

**DETAILED SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION:** Potential presenters are also required to attach a more detailed summary of their presentation to this form (2 page maximum).

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** Joint Council provides CE credits to attendees. Learning objectives are an essential part of the CE process. Therefore, a minimum of three learning objectives is required. Please review attached directions for the correct format for learning objectives. Learning objectives not submitted in the proper format will be returned to the applicant for re-submission.

**BRIEF BIOGRAPHY FOR EACH PRESENTER:** Please provide a brief, one paragraph biography for each presenter in the space below; this description will be used in Joint Council Symposium publications.

**DETAILED RESUME FOR EACH PRESENTER:** Potential presenters are also required to attach a full resume or CV to the application.

**All proposals must be emailed no later than **September 21, 2012** to [Symposium@jointcouncil.org](mailto:Symposium@jointcouncil.org). Only complete proposals will be considered. If you do not receive electronic confirmation of receipt of your application please contact Joint Council at the number provided below.**

Joint Council on International Children's Services  
117 South Saint Asaph Street • Alexandria, VA 22314  
Tel: (703) 535-8845 • Fax: (703) 535-8840

**EQUIPMENT REQUIRED:** AV equipment available to presenters is listed below. Please keep in mind that this equipment is very expensive to rent, therefore please only request what you need. Presentations formatted for MAC computers can not be accommodated. Please be prepared to use PCs only. Any additional equipment requested after March 1, 2013 will be accommodated, if possible, at the expense of the presenter.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flip Chart                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Overhead Projector          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DVD Video Player & TV Monitor                  | <input type="checkbox"/> CD Player                   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sound for Power Point presentations | <input type="checkbox"/> LCD Projector & PC Computer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                                    |  |

**BRIEF SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION:** (50 words or less)

After placement, what responsibilities (if any) do adoptive parents have to the country of origin and to the birth family? Much informal connection is occurring, without oversight or evaluation. Are birth families, adoptees, future adoptees, and countries of origin being helped or harmed?

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** (please refer to next page for further instructions)

This workshop is designed to help participants:

- \* Analyze the realities of post-placement adoptive parent practices;
- \* Discuss the ethical and economic impact of adoptive parents' interactions with birth/first families;
- \* Demonstrate the impact of philanthropic work in countries of origin on adoption practice;
- \* Apply existing research by and about international adult adoptees regarding birth family and country of origin engagement; and
- \* Create Standards of Best Practice for Adoptive Parents.

**BRIEF BIOGRAPHY FOR EACH PRESENTER:** (one paragraph)

Maureen McCauley Evans is an adoptive parent of 4 (now) young adults. She was the first Executive Director of the Joint Council on International Services, and worked for the Barker Foundation and CHSFS-East as well. She has presented at numerous adoption and child welfare conferences, including CWLA, NACAC, APC-New York, and more. Maureen graduated from Georgetown University, and has a master's degree from the University of Maryland.

## **DETAILED SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION:**

In recent years, international adoption practice has been roiling with changes, as adoptive parents seek more connections with first/birth families, as adult adoptees speak out about corruption and fraud, and as countries of origin wrangle with the impact of money and Western influence on child welfare advocacy. Adoptive parents correctly look to Standards of Practice when considering adoption agencies and social workers, whether at the beginning of an adoption or years after placement.

Is it time to consider Standards of Best Practice for adoptive parents?

An immediate argument against this would be the impossibility of enforcement. That is not, however, sufficient to close the door on the conversation. While it's unwieldy, emotional, and complicated to consider creating Standards of Practice for adoptive parents, the time has come for the topic to see the light of day. This workshop will examine the ethical and economic impact of adoptive parents' connections with the country of origin, looking at Ethiopia in particular.

Information will be provided on current practices involving adoptive parents' meeting with birth parents/families at the time of placement. What is the rationale for these meetings? How has the practice changed in the last several years, and what evaluations have been done as to the impact on the families and on the adoptee?

What is the economic and ethical impact of these meetings? That is, after this initial meeting, how do the families re-connect, if at all? Should they? Is there unanimity of agency policy and practice regarding this? Agencies are aware of ongoing family contact, though they have little ability to enforce behavior. This has to affect their ability to work in particular areas over time. How can agencies and adoptive families work together?

Birth families are severely constrained by geography and extremely limited resources, as well as language and cultural differences. What follow-up, if any, is provided to them? And if the answer is "none," is that acceptable?

Increasing numbers of adoptive families are bringing their children back to Ethiopia for visits with the first/birth family. While agencies cannot monitor or oversee this in most cases, they are surely affected by it, in terms of information shared between adoptive and birth families, as well as potential impact on the economy. Much criticism is directed toward adoption agencies for inadequate post-placement work. Are these visits redefining or replacing post-placement (best) practice?

Further, many adoptive parents blog candidly and publicly about their adopted children (whether with pride or grave concern) before, during, and after placement. Many parents post all sorts of private information and details about their children and the birth families. This workshop will examine this reality, and will call upon the views and experiences of adult international adoptees for their perspectives. Having the views of first/birth families is vital as well. Many adult adoptees are in reunion with their birth families, and thus additional insights will be provided. All too often, we don't hear anything from those first families, and it is a glaring oversight in terms of practice.

Another recent development in international adoption is the ostensibly good work of adoptive parents in creating nonprofit organizations to “give back” to their child’s country of origin. This has certainly been the case in Ethiopia, as adoptive parents have worked to improve health and education in particular. How do these “good works” affect Ethiopia in terms of local economies? What happens when adoptive parents visit the tiny town where their child was born and build a school or a system for clean water? What if the adoptive parents want their project to employ members of the birth family? What if the incentive to place children for adoption is inadvertently and covertly increased by virtue of these projects?

There is no guarantee that this presentation will provide neat, tidy answers. There really aren’t any. If, however, international adoption is going to continue, these issues must be considered in thoughtful forums, and then the conversation must be expanded and continued. Adoptive parents have significant responsibilities to their children, to their children’s first families, and to their children’s country of origin, and those responsibilities have ramifications around the world.

**All proposals must be emailed no later than **September 21, 2012** to [Symposium@jointcouncil.org](mailto:Symposium@jointcouncil.org). Only complete proposals will be considered. If you do not receive electronic confirmation of receipt of your application please contact Joint Council at the number provided below.**

Joint Council on International Children’s Services  
117 South Saint Asaph Street • Alexandria, VA 22314  
Ph: (703) 525-8045 Fax: (703) 525-8040