

SUMMER OF HOPE 2009 COMMITTEE DESCRIPTIONS

Family/Child Committee

The Family/Child Committee assists with identification of children for the summer program, recruits host families and back-up families from the community, oversees the matching process of the host families and children and prepares the host families for their hosting experience. The Family/Child Committee gathers information on children who have been identified as possible participants and coordinates with the local social worker for the matching process. The Family/Child Committee also coordinates the social worker pre-hosting visits and oversees the host families in the completion of their paperwork requirements. Additionally, the Family/Child Committee arranges for the host family training including securing a facility for the training, arranging for transportation and lodging of the trainer (if necessary) and providing needed materials, food, etc. etc. The Family/Child Committee members advocate for the children all the way to finding the children permanent homes. This includes working with the child placing agency and providing assistance to host families so they can complete the adoption process. Because this committee oversees some very crucial components of the Summer of Hope program, the Summer of Hope Coordinator serves as the head of this committee.

Publicity Committee

The Publicity Committee is responsible for managing communications about the Summer of Hope program and seeking opportunities to get the word out about the plight of the children and their need for help. Publicity efforts entail approaching local churches for inclusion of information on the Summer of Hope program in their bulletins and newsletters and working with local news outlets including newspaper, radio and television. In addition to working with the media, volunteers on this committee will make presentations to organizations and community groups to inform people of the need children have to receive the love of a family. These groups include: churches, schools, civic organizations, parent groups, employee groups, sorority houses and anything else you can think of. The Publicity Committee will also arrange for the media to be present at the children's arrival and departure and weekday and weekend events.

Fund Raising Committee

To make Summer of Hope happen, we need to be able to pay for the travel costs, identification and preparation of the children, escort per diems, insurance, medical and psychological evaluations, publicity, and placement efforts in finding every child a host family. Our fund raising goal is \$3,000 per child. The Fund Raising Committee designs and organizes the fund raising efforts. Host families and volunteers from the community help with the actual fund raising events. The Sacred Portion Children's Outreach provides the Fund Raising Committee with a fund raising guide with instructions on how to organize various fund raising events including a Hope Walk/Run which is our main fund raising event for the Summer of Hope program.

Summer Activity Committee

One of the goals of the Summer of Hope program is to provide children with a unique cultural and educational experience. While visiting the U.S., the children attend activities during the week. The Summer Activity Committee arranges and oversees the daytime activities for the children, utilizing summer recreation programs within the community. The committee works to get scholarships or waived/reduced fees for activities such as swim lessons, Taekwondo classes, children's museums, etc. Summer activities are held once or twice a week. We have found that scheduling too many activities takes away from time that the host families want to have at home with their children and can become exhausting with families feeling that they are constantly on the move.

Health Professionals Committee

There is a special need for volunteer health professionals to be part of a network that will provide medical and psychological services to the children while they are participating in the Summer of Hope program. The children are in need of: physical examination, dental and vision examinations and hearing screenings. The Health Professionals Committee identifies and contacts local physicians, dentists ophthalmologists, ENTs, mental health professionals and nutritionists that might want to participate and contribute to the program. It is very important that the health professionals who choose to participate in the program be well educated about the purpose and nature of the program and coached on what to say and not say to the children whom they will see.

Advocacy Event Committee

The summer events serve two purposes. One is to bring the host families and children together for social interaction. Host parents need the opportunity to informally share with each other how their hosting experience is going and the children enjoy connecting and spending time with each other. The events also provide a venue in which to advocate for the children. The Summer Event Committee organizes the events, recruits sponsors and ensures that persons interested in meeting the children are notified of the events. The Summer Event Committee works closely with the Publicity Committee on getting press at the events. Events conducive to advocacy would include a gathering at a local park or barbecue at someone's house. Other events to be enjoyed by the host families and their children might include a short, easy hike, a day of boating and picnicking by a lake, an outing to a water slide park, etc.

Translator Committee

It is necessary with the Summer of Hope program to have volunteer translators who can speak the language of the sending country. Translators will aid in transition of the children to their host family homes and routines and preparing them for what to expect each day. They will also provide language assistance at summer events and be on-call for host families who need help in communicating with their host children when issues arise. The Translator Committee works closely with the Summer Events Committee to coordinate translator attendance at events, etc.

Hospitality Committee

This committee is in charge of coordinating the arrival and departure of the children at the airport. They may include securing a room in the airport where the children and families can gather, getting snacks, communicating the plan to the families and volunteers and notifying host families of delayed or missed flights. It is a nice gesture to greet the escorts and children with some type of welcome gift. This could be a small bouquet of flowers for the escorts, little treat bags for the kids, American flags or balloons. Red, white and blue are a great color theme for the “welcome to the USA” gifts. The Hospitality Committee works closely with the Translator Committee to arrange for translators to be at the airport to help the introductions of the children to their host families go smoothly.

Escort Committee

Escorts are usually non-English speakers whose main responsibility is to ensure the children are cared for and safe. The Escort Committee is responsible for securing housing for the escorts for the four weeks that they will be in our community. Oftentimes members of churches are willing to house the escorts. Community hosts that are of the same nationality as the escorts can help the escorts to feel more comfortable by having someone to converse with in their native language and who can cook familiar foods. In addition to arranging community hosts for the escort, this committee will have the task of ensuring that the escorts are able to meet their obligations with the children, attend activities and events, see sights and have a good time while they are in the U.S. The Escort Committee will need to arrange a schedule for the escort to visit the home of each host family at least once during the four weeks. Volunteers on this committee may need to assist in transporting escorts to weekday and weekend events and to the homes of the host families.

