



Waunakee Rotary Club

Nov. 6, 2008
Vol. 42 No. 16

Through much perseverance and a three-year wait, the Hunter family found an invaluable reward – a beautiful 10-month-old daughter whom they adopted from Vietnam.

Karleen Hunter told the Rotary about the process of adopting Wren, her bright-eyed, smiling baby, during a talk at the Oct. 30 meeting.

The Town of Vienna family's long journey began in February of 2005 when Brian and Karleen decided to adopt a baby from China. Karleen said she had once worked as a nanny with a family who had seven adopted children, and that experience planted the idea.

In 2005, adopting a baby from China was much simpler, she said. Initially, a home study was done, and that process took nine months. China then had the Hunters' paperwork for a year, and over that period of time, the qualifications for adopting a child had changed. Her family was turned town in April of 2007.

That rejection was hard for Karleen, who runs a family day care.

"For someone to tell us we were not qualified seemed not fair," she said.

The adoption workers then suggested the family turn to Vietnam for a child. The process there was much easier. Finally, the family got their first referral and a picture in the mail of a girl they decided to name Lily.

"It was like when you find out you're pregnant. You fall in love with the baby," Karleen said.

But then adopting children in Vietnam became more difficult, as well as, as measures were taken to prevent human trafficking, Karleen said. In December of 2007, the family learned it would be unable to adopt Lily.

"It was so discouraging," Karleen said. "The orphanage where she was at no longer wanted to work with us."

In March of 2008, the family

received another referral for a little girl. And that was hard in its own way.

"We still prayed for Lily every day," she said.

It took some time, but the family fell in love with Wren, too, as they had with Lily. In July, the family received permission to travel to Vietnam, and that step was huge. Two days later, the travel days were set. The family hurried to arrange the trip and went to Vietnam two weeks later.

Karleen said she experienced culture shock once in Hanoi. That night, as she traveled to the hotel, she saw families sitting outside eating their meals. She also feared she would not bond with Wren.

But the following day, she found her surroundings less fearful. And when she arrived at the orphanage, Wren's nanny cried as she gave the child over to the Hunter family.

"I cried because I knew she was loved," Karleen said.

Karleen expected the child to have developmental delays, but actually, she's doing fine developmentally. She's a little small for an American baby, but the average size for a Vietnamese infant. And the bonding between Karleen and Wren took place right away, she said.

"She's connected with everyone in the family," Karleen said, adding that Wren also has two older siblings.

Most of all, Karleen said she was afraid to travel to Vietnam. Although the country is beautiful, it's also very poor. Growing up in the U.S. with the Hunter family, Wren will have greater opportunities, she said.

Karleen encouraged others to adopt, noting that despite the wait and disappointments along the way, she would do it over again.

Other items:

•Harriet Statz said the 25 or so

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Calendar of Events:

•Nov. 19, Service Club luncheon.

Rotary exchange students throughout the area will have a social program and overnight in Waunakee this January. Help is needed for this night.

•President Dan Statz said the club has lost about six members this year and encouraged members to bring a guest who might like to join.

Guests: Bill Tygum, guest of Phil Willems and Rich; Jessica Durden, guest of Pat Durden.

Birthdays: None.

Anniversaries: Nov. 6, Jim and Margaret Meyer; Nov. 6, Dick and Sally Pilsner; Nov. 9, Bill and Jeanette Erickson.

Prayers: Nov. 6, Patrick Durden; Nov. 13, Susan Vergeront; Nov. 20, Leonard Allen.

Programs: Nov. 6, Club Assembly.

Greeters: Nov. 6, Richard Murphy, Dan Muxfeld; Nov. 13, Ed Niebuhr, Linda Olson; Nov. 20, Danny Paul, Ted Pertzborn.

Make up meetings online

It's easy to make up a meeting on the Internet. The site is www.rotaryclubone.org. Print out the form and give it to Phil Willems, the club secretary.