

Here We Come!

Crossing Borders, Connecting Families

ISS-USA 2008 ANNUAL REPORT



BRINGING RESOLUTION
ACROSS BORDERS

ISS-USA

2009-2011...

Value Statement

ISS-USA is committed to the ethical practice of social service that embraces **human dignity, inclusivity, empirical and experiential expertise** that results in successful outcomes for children, adults, and families separated by international borders.

Vision

We envision a world in which all interested parties have access to technical, structural and practical support needed to **achieve the best interest of children, adults and families** separated by international borders.

Mission

The mission of ISS-USA is to **promote resolutions** in the best interests of children, adults and families separated by international borders.

Action

ISS-USA accomplishes its mission through the provision of **intercountry social services, research, training, technical assistance and advocacy.**

Optimism + Vision = Plan

The theme of this year's annual report, **Here We Come**, combines our bold optimism for the future with the many accomplishments of this past year.

In a changing world, where families are ever more likely to have multi-national compositions, we are making a profound difference in people's lives. It jumps off the pages of this report – in the news, in the stories and in the statistics. In all, **we helped 2577 people through repatriation, home studies, tracings, searches and a host of related services.**

While we are proud of our successes in casework, we have continued to broaden our efforts to affect change. Our advances in **research, training and advocacy** have produced new and exciting outcomes. As a result, ISS-USA has become a leading voice in international social work.

We have had important developments in each of these areas. In **research**, we developed a tracking database for repatriation and have laid the groundwork to study the outcomes of transnational foster care cases as part of our Fostering Connections Discretionary Grant.

Through our Arthur C. Helton Institute for the Study of International Social Service, we created an annual world-class **training** event in Baltimore. In its first year, the conference attracted more than 70 registrants from nine states and three countries who had an opportunity to learn from an impressive roster of 31 presenters over a three-day event.

It was also an important year for **advocacy**, as we brought important awareness and perspective to the challenges of addressing children's needs when they are separated from family by national borders.

As we close the book on the past year, we take great pride in our accomplishments while acknowledging the many challenges ahead. Through our work this year, we are both optimistic and emboldened to accept these challenges.

Thank you for your continued interest and support. We hope you'll stay tuned because **Here We Come.**

**ISS-USA
has become
a leading voice
in international
social work.**



JULIE GILBERT ROSICKY, *Executive Director*

ROBERT CHARLES HILL, *President, Board of Directors*

Highlights & Statistics

2008 in Numbers

A total of **267 Repatriation cases** were opened. This includes repatriation services to **351** individuals, **23** of whom did not repatriate due to their cases being cancelled. Of the **328** people served, **219** were adults, **109** were children and **19 of the 109 children** were

unaccompanied children. In all, **33 percent** of all individuals served through the U.S. Repatriation program in 2008 were **children**.

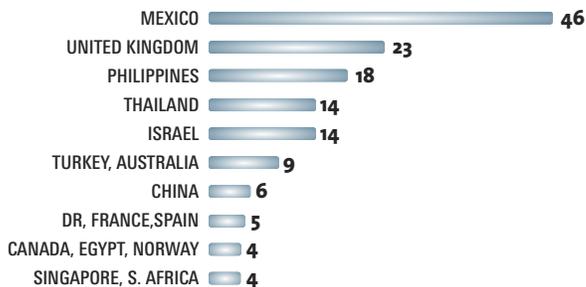
The average age of adults was **43** years with a range of **19 to 83**.

The average age of children was **13** years with a range of **2 to 18**.

Repatriates arrived from a total of **73 countries** as compared to 61 countries in the last contract year.

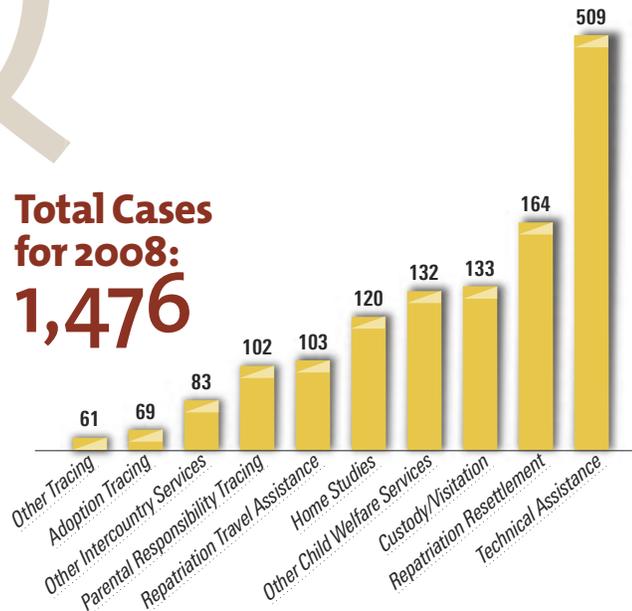
They were resettled to a total of **45 states** (including Puerto Rico) as compared to 38 states in the last contract year.

The most common departure countries and the most common states of final destination are summarized below from most to least.



Most Common Departure Countries

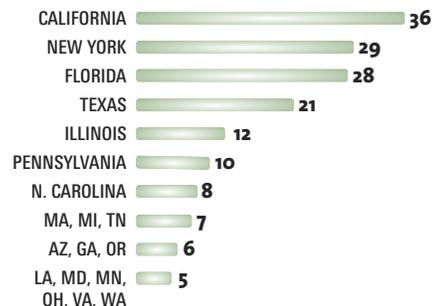
Total Cases for 2008: 1,476



In 2008, ISS-USA handled **1,476 cases** involving **2,577 individuals**. **Children** were involved in **70% of all cases**.

Repatriation Program

ISS-USA, through a cooperative agreement with The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), provides repatriation assistance to **U.S. citizen adults, families and children** returning from other countries because of destitution, mental illness, armed conflict or natural disaster. The U.S. Repatriation Program provides **temporary assistance, care and treatment** for persons after they have returned to the U.S.



Most Common Destination States

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

*ISS-USA will strive to become a **national resource center** for individuals, agencies and groups working with children and adults separated from their families or homeland by international borders.*

Building a Better Network

ISS-USA together with ORR embarked on the development of a new program database to measure program effectiveness. Specifically ISS-USA and ORR will measure actions made to assist repatriating individuals or families to become self-sufficient on or before 90 days post-arrival. The new database will be ready for use in late 2009.



Charles Shipman

The organization took great strides in the past year in strengthening its network of repatriation coordinators. Each state was asked to update their repatriation agreement with HHS/ORR. More than 60% of the states have completed this process – one that requires the Governor of each state to appoint a State Repatriation Coordinator. More than half of all states now have new state coordinators.

Training state partners was a primary focus for the **Repatriation Program** this year. **Training Manager Salome Sullivan** visited eleven cities to provide program training, and facilitated an important teleconference training that was attended by 88 people from 37 states. These sessions were designed to present helpful ways to manage cases, share best practices advice, and to assist states in building their capacity to provide repatriation services.

The results have been good. According to **Charles Shipman**, a recently appointed state coordinator from Arizona, “I previously had very limited knowledge of the repatriation program. **The training provided an excellent overview of the program’s purpose, operations and the impact that it has on the lives of vulnerable citizens returning to the U.S.**”

ISS-USA Online

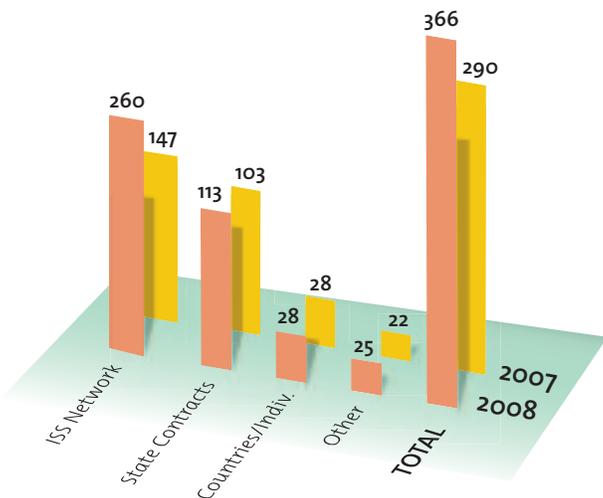
In 2008 ISS-USA launched a **new website**. Recent statistics show a sharp increase in the number of visitors, on average 1,600 more visitors each month since the new site was introduced.

ISS-USA also added an **on-line inquiry form**. In the first half of 2009, inquiries had reached the level of the total number for 2008.

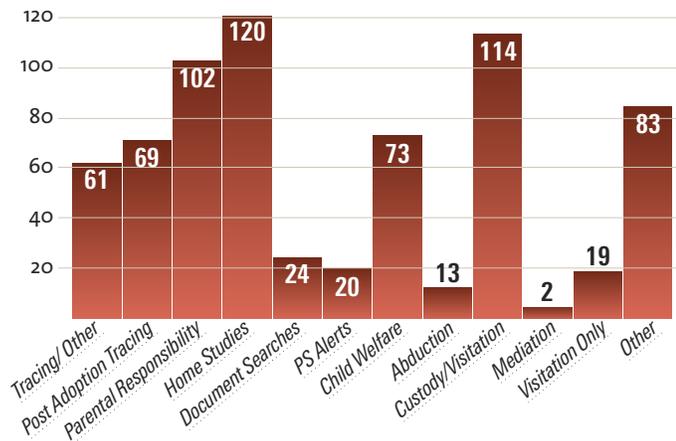
509 people sought technical assistance from ISS on a wide variety of issues.

The following is a breakdown of the types of questions that were asked of ISS-USA.

Custody/Visitation/Abduction	30
Repatriation	91
Home Study	171
Other	71
Adoption Info	77
Tracing	69
TOTAL	509



Where Intercountry Cases Originate



Types of Intercountry Services



Arthur C. Helton
Institute

Accom



ISS-USA hosts first International Social Work Conference:

Crossing Borders, Connecting Families

More than 70 social workers from nine states and three countries came to Baltimore in September as ISS-USA's Arthur C. Helton Institute (ACH) hosted its first-ever conference, **Crossing Borders, Connecting Families: International Social Service in the 21st Century**.

The three-day event featured 31

presenters including keynote speakers **Kelly Ryan**, Deputy Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration, and **Dr. Jody Olsen**, Deputy Director of Peace Corp.

The conference, made possible in part by the cooperation and support of the University of Maryland School of Social Work, was patterned to coincide with three key areas in



Dr. Jody Olsen

ISS-USA's definition of international social work:

- (a) social work being done in the United States with individuals and families from overseas (refugees, asylees, immigrants);
- (b) social work being done in the United States with individuals and families with transnational issues, international adoption, abduction and placement options; and
- (c) social work being done outside of the U.S. (e.g. Peace Corp).

Presentations

Child Welfare in a Global World: Expanding the Meaning of Inter-jurisdictional

October 20th, 2008, Washington, DC
Presented at The Children's Bureau 2008 Policy to Practice Dialogue

Safe Repatriation
October 21st-23rd, 2008
George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia.

Presented at the Conference on Protection of Unaccompanied and Separated Children

Transnational Subcommittee of Migration and Child Welfare National Network

Jan 26-28 2009, San Antonio, TX
Facilitated discussion on transnational child welfare issues and repatriation.

Presented at Immigration, Child Welfare and Borders

Expanding Horizons: Cultural Competence Across Borders

February 25, 2009, Washington, DC
Presented at the 2009 CWLA National Conference: "Children Today...America's Future!"

Expanding the Meaning of Interjurisdictional: International Issues in Child Welfare

July 14, 2009, Chicago, IL
Presented at at the 72nd National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) Annual Conference: "On the Road to Change"

For more info about this conference, see the press release: <http://www.iss-usa.org/pressdetails.asp?ldPress=17>

plishments

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

*ISS-USA will use social work expertise to **advocate** for stronger practices and laws to support decision making in the best interests of children, adults and families separated by international borders.*

Wendy Bryant Gow (see the story in our 2007 annual report), was also a featured speaker. Wendy shared her story about her adoption by an



Wendy Bryant Gow (left) with Jamie Ergas—the MSW social work intern who helped Wendy reunite with her family in Japan.

American couple who raised her as their own child, while never hiding her half-Japanese heritage. She recounted the ultimate shock, relief and overwhelming contentment of finally reconnecting with her birth-mother's family 50 years later.

Theme and Dates for 2009 Conference are announced

The 2009 Conference, **Practical Considerations: The Nexus of Social Work and Law in International Child Welfare**, has been scheduled for **October 30-31, 2009 in Baltimore**. The aim of this year's conference is to bring together legal and social service personnel who work with children and families separated across international borders.

From the Director's Desk

In July 2007, with generous funding from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, iss-USA launched the Arthur C. Helton Institute for the Study of International Social Service.

The purpose of the Institute is to provide training and technical support to social service, legal providers, and child advocates on a wide variety of issues related to children and families separated by international borders. The Institute is also the advocacy arm of iss-USA. The Institute relies on the practical experience of the intercountry and repatriation staff of iss-USA to provide important data to support the advancement of trainings, research and advocacy projects and grant development.

Over the past two years, the Institute has narrowed its focus to one specific issue: **the development of best practices in working with children in the U.S. Foster care system who may have family able and willing to provide a permanent and safe home for them outside of the**

United States. This work will be accomplished through key partnerships with local, state and federal governments, other non-profit agencies and academic institutions.

On October 1, 2009 with a **Fostering Connections Discretionary Grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**, Administration for Children and Families Children's Bureau, the Institute will begin work with the State of New Jersey's Depart-

ment of Children and Families, Division of Youth and Family Services and Rutgers University School of Social Work Institute for Families to collect data on the number of children in N.J. who have potential overseas fam-

ily placement and to develop training for all social workers and legal professionals on new procedures for family finding for all children with potential placements outside the U.S.

We aim for this demonstration grant to lead to a model that can be replicated across the U.S.

DR. FELICITY SACKVILLE NORTHCOTT
Director of ACH Institute



Federation Activities

VISITS TO ISS-USA

Jean Ayoub, iss Secretary General, **Stephen Yau**, Executive Director of iss Hong Kong, **Olivier Geissler**, iss Switzerland and **Margaret Paton** formerly of iss uk recently visited ISS-USA. Jean Ayoub traveled from Geneva, Switzerland to share his vision and strategic plan for the federation with ISS-USA board members. The meeting, held October 10, 2008 at iss-USA's Baltimore offices,

covered a wide range of topics, including casework, development and network development strategies.

"I was impressed by the meeting in Baltimore, its structure, clarity and simplicity," Jean Ayoub reported.

"Jean's visit couldn't have come at a better time," according to ISS-USA Executive Director Julie Rosicky. "We are excited by the energy he is bringing to the iss mission all over the

world. We look forward to working with him on his ambitious agenda."



Jean Ayoub



Margaret Patton and Olivier Geissler



Stephen Yau

ISS International Council Meeting



(From left) H. Daskal, Israel, S. Yau, Hong Kong, N Ndiaye, Senegal, J. Rosicky, USA, V. Tapia, Spain, D. Chamney, Canada, G. Scholz, Germany

32 attendees representing 18 countries gathered in South Africa for the ISS International Council Meeting and charted a course for the future

May 24-25

Correspondent Training Southern Sun, The Cullinan, Cape Town.

The two-day training provided an overview of iss, critical information about children in migration, iss methodology, case illustrations and practical discussions.

In addition iss-USA's executive director **Julie Rosicky** presented, "Building Capacity Across the Globe," defining the important elements of running any type of agency, identifying strengths and challenges, and how to find resources that don't cost money. Representatives were present from **Turkey, Algeria, Burundi, Senegal, Sri Lanka** and **Ireland**.

May 26-27

International Council Meeting

Dr. Maria Mabetoa, Deputy Director-

General of the Department of Social Development (DSD) in South Africa welcomed all participants in the spirit of **Ubuntu***.

The goal of the meeting was to review activities of the past three years, and set



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

ISS-USA's partnership with the ISS Federation will seek to increase capacity throughout ISS's global network, particularly in developing countries.

Meeting May 24-29, Cape Town South Africa

the agenda for ISS for the next three. The last meeting of the International Council was held in Hong Kong in 2006.

One of the largest tasks on the agenda included discussions about how best to revise the organization's statutes.

In addition, discussions also focused on the search for a new organization president and the approval to host the next International Council meeting, co-hosted by ISS-USA and ISS Canada, in Banff, Canada in 2012.

May 28

The celebration and day-long programming was held at Cape Town International Convention Centre.

ISS South Africa Turns 10!

ISS South Africa celebrated its 10th birthday and organized an impressive line up of speakers for **Child Protection Week**, an event designed to bring awareness to issues facing children, as part of South Africa's commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

The event featured presentations by **Mr. V. Madonsela**, the Director General of the Department of Social Development, **Mr. Jean Ayoub**, Secretary General of ISS, **Ms. A Girma**, Country Representative for UNICEF, **Mr. Rolf Widmer**, Director of ISS Switzerland, **Ms. Kinsey Rasebitse**, ISS South Africa, and **Mr. D Plato**, Executive Mayor of Cape Town. Also of interest were



excellent presentations by **Mr. P Solomon** and **Ms. MV Ngcobo-Mbere**, who discussed the risks for child exploitation during the FIFA 2010 World Cup, and the city's plan to reduce these risks and protect the safety and well-being of children during this month-long international soccer tournament.

May 29

Meeting Business Concluded



Mary Jane Fales and Julie Rosicky at the Cape of Good Hope.

Rolf Widmer (below, center), ISS Switzerland and **Doug Lewis**, ISS UK (right) presented a special thank you to **Kinsey Rasbitse** and ISS South Africa for hosting the international council event.



* Ubuntu (Zulu)

A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole...

— ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU, 1999

A Father Fights Emptiness, Hoping For Court Reversal

EACH DAY NEDD LESTRADE WAKES UP on the Southern Caribbean island of Nevis and wonders if he will ever hold the son he has only known through photographs. It's heartbreaking for the 31-year-old landscape designer who has been stripped of his parental rights by the American judicial system.

"I feel cheated," says Lestrade.

"They have taken my son away from me completely."

Lestrade's life changed several years ago while working in a dive shop on his native island of Dominica. It was there that he met Amy*, an American studying at a nearby university. Lestrade describes her as "sweet and caring, somebody you really wanted to know." Their 18-month friendship grew, and when Amy became pregnant, the couple made plans for marriage — plans that were broken off when religious differences became too great an obstacle to overcome.

"She was upset, but the pressure she put on me to convert to her faith was overwhelming," says Lestrade. "I knew it wasn't going to work." Their relationship ended acrimoniously, and Amy returned home to the United States.

The next time they spoke, Amy had big news. "She called me the day after Matthew* was born and told me how much he looked like me. It was a joyous time," he says.

Joy quickly turned to pain, when Amy called several days later, saying **"It's done. Matthew was adopted today"** "I

couldn't do anything," Lestrade recalls. **"I was helpless. I had no one to contact and no means to fight for my son."** His attempts to convince Amy that he should raise his son were fruitless.



"I picture myself holding Matthew in my arms. That's how I want this to end."
—NEDD LESTRADE

When an attorney coordinating Matthew's adoption contacted Nedd to surrender his parental rights, he refused. "I was very upset," says Lestrade. "When the papers arrived, I wrote that I objected. It was then that an attorney was appointed to represent me."

Cheryl Garrity, the Massachusetts-based attorney who represented Lestrade, petitioned the court to pay for a Home Study to evaluate Lestrade's ability to raise Matthew. ISS-USA conducted a thorough evaluation, one that suggested that Lestrade could raise his son.

Unfortunately, the judge never saw the report, and terminated Nedd's parental rights on the basis that he had never met his child. The decision disregarded Lestrade's visa problems and financial circumstances — realities which made such a meeting impossible.

Though the ruling is under appeal, Matthew is nearly three years old. He has never seen the father whose resemblance he bears. He doesn't

know the home that waits for him or the grandparents who love him but may never meet him. It's a sad story, one that has energized ISS-USA and others who seek reform in order to protect the interests of children and families separated by international borders.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4

*ISS-USA will strengthen its capacity, internally and externally, to achieve successful outcomes through **staff and board development, diverse and expanded funding, and increased collaboration, cooperation and visibility.***

“This is a case where the father, who lived outside the U.S. was not on equal footing,” says ISS-USA Executive Director **Julie Rosicky**. “The Convention on the Rights of the Child demands that we respect the child’s right to preserve his or her nationality, name and family relations. It’s alarming that cases like this continue to arise. **We are working hard to encourage reform so that family members outside the U.S. receive the same consideration and due diligence as**

potential family within the U.S.”

For Nedd, that reform can’t come soon enough. “There’s an emptiness in me. I keep hope that the judge will overturn the decision and that I will have a chance to raise my son,” he says. “I picture myself holding Matthew in my arms. That’s how I want this to end.”

*The names of the mother and child have been changed to protect their identities.

Three Months And 21 Hours Later, An Injured American Returns Home

The Unlikely Story of Dawn Cole

9

THE ROAD TO UGANDA took a cruel and horrific turn for Dawn Cole. The 42-year-old mother from Bristol, CT had just completed a two-year stint as a contractor in Iraq when she lost control of the car she was driving to meet her fiancé’s family in the Ugandan countryside. The car flipped over and rolled down a ravine, leaving Dawn paralyzed from the neck down.

It took two days to get her to a hut hospital that could not treat her extensive injuries. Later she was flown to a Kenyan hospital in Nairobi, where she endured two operations, had limited communication with staff that did not speak very much English, isolation from her family, uncertainty about her condition, and ultimately, threats that the hospital would “throw her into the streets” if her family didn’t continue to pay the mounting medical bills. “I thought she was going to die over there,” said Brier Cole,

Dawn’s brother.

Thanks to the efforts of Dawn’s family, the case was brought to the attention of the Department of State and ISS-USA. “It was a difficult repatriation,” says **Audrey Noguera**, a Repatriation Case Manager with ISS-USA. “There were so many issues and so many people involved.”

Nearly three months later, Dawn was on a 21-hour flight home on a medically equipped airplane. Once on the ground in Connecticut, there was a team in place to assure Dawn’s care. **“It was the most rewarding and most complex case we have ever encountered,”** said Richard Burt, Repatriation Coordinator* for the Connecticut Department of Social Services. **“ISS played a vital role. They did a remarkable job of pulling all of**



the details together for the Cole Family.”

Today Dawn is receiving care and important therapy at a New Britain, CT hospital. She has regained partial use of her hands. She and her fiancé, Daniel Turinawe, are now married. Her family is genuinely thankful. “I want to fight to walk again,” Dawn said. “I’m not gonna let this stop me.”

*The U.S. Repatriation Program is made possible through a cooperative agreement provided by HHS/ACF/Office of Refugee Resettlement..

Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets

Year ended December 31, 2008 with Summarized Information for 2007

SUPPORT AND REVENUE	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	2008	2007
Contributions				
Foundations and agencies (Notes 2 and 3)	\$ 103,212	\$ —	\$ 103,212	\$ 85,930
Individuals and corporations	33,492	—	33,492	8,750
In-Kind contributions	116,863	—	116,863	24,000
	253,567	—	253,567	118,680
Services Provided				
U.S. Government	809,608	—	809,608	1,047,428
State Governments	203,827	—	203,827	192,300
Other	90,699	—	90,699	39,342
	1,104,134	—	1,104,134	984,685
Other Revenue	8,968	—	8,968	13,772
Net assets released from restrictions (Note 2)	94,772	(94,772)	—	—
Total Support and Revenue	1,461,441	(94,772)	1,366,669	1,117,137
EXPENSES				
Program Services				
Intercountry casework/repatriation	1,138,178	—	1,138,178	937,600
Management and General Administrative	209,846	—	209,846	224,241
Total Expenses	1,348,024	—	1,348,024	1,161,841
Change in Net Assets	113,417	(94,772)	18,645	(44,704)
NET ASSETS				
Beginning of year	248,729	94,772	343,501	388,205
End of Year	\$ 362,146	\$ —	\$ 362,146	\$ 343,501

The accompanying financial information has been derived from the audited financial statements of ISS-USA for the year ended December 31, 2008. A full copy of this statement, prepared by Tait, Weller and Baker LLP, Certified Public Accountants is available upon request.

ISS-USA Yankee Day

On July 20th, 2008, ISS-USA participated in the final season of the historic Yankee Stadium. Mrs. Mindy Franklin Levine, Director of the Yankees Universe Fund hosted a friend and fundraising event which raised awareness of ISS-USA's unique and essential mission to promote resolutions in the best interests of children, adults and families separated by international borders.

A special thank you to Melinda Franklin and Randy Levine for hosting ISS-USA at the New York Yankees.



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and anyone else that we might have missed.

Staff



Our many successes this past year would not have been possible without the committed efforts of our talented staff.

Top row L to R:
Felicity Northcott,
Stephney Allen,
Brenda Allen,
Amanda Williams,
Susan Oslund,
Marianne DiGerolamo,
Laura Bitner,
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Left to right: NANCY H. GREENE, JACQUELINE BHABHA, JAMES CALVIN, MARY JANE FALES, JULIE ROSICKY, ROBERT CHARLES HILL, BRUCE MORRISON, ROBERT MILES AND MUNI FIGUERES.
Not pictured: BARBARA GILMORE, KATE BURNS AND ALEX PAPACHRISTOU

ROBERT CHARLES HILL

President, is the founder of Hill & Associates, PLLC, a law firm focused on providing professional services to meet the special needs of global sports and entertainment organizations and international athletes and other celebrities in immigration and visa matters.

MARY JANE FALES

Vice President, is a human services consultant. She is an individually elected member of the International Council of the iss world federation and a former executive director of ISS-USA.

DR. ROBERT G. MILES

Treasurer, is President and Chief Executive Officer of Lutheran Child and Family Service of Michigan, a statewide agency, with a staff of 400, providing an array of child welfare services, including family preservation, foster care, residential treatment of adolescents and adoption.

NANCY H. GREENE

Secretary, is a former social worker and attorney, and is currently working as a Legal Recruiter for E.P. Dine, Inc. in New York City. Prior to going to law school, Nancy worked for ISS-USA as Director of Intercountry Services.

JACQUELINE BHABHA

is the director of the University Committee on Human Rights Studies at Harvard University and Jeremiah Smith Junior Lecturer at Harvard Law School.

KATE BURNS

is Senior Policy Officer – Gender Equality for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs at the United Nations, in New York. She has worked for 30 years in international humanitarian action in Africa, Asia, Latin America and at the UN in Geneva.

MUNI FIGUERES

was Minister of Foreign Trade of Costa Rica, External Relations Advisor at the Inter-American Development Bank, Washington DC; and is a board member of several international educational and development institutions.

BARBARA GILMORE

is an environmentalist, conservation supporter, a teacher/naturalist and serves on the boards of Wisconsin Public Radio and the Task Force on Family Violence. Gilmore is also a member of Rachel’s Network, a national organization that engages women in environmental activism.

BRUCE A. MORRISON

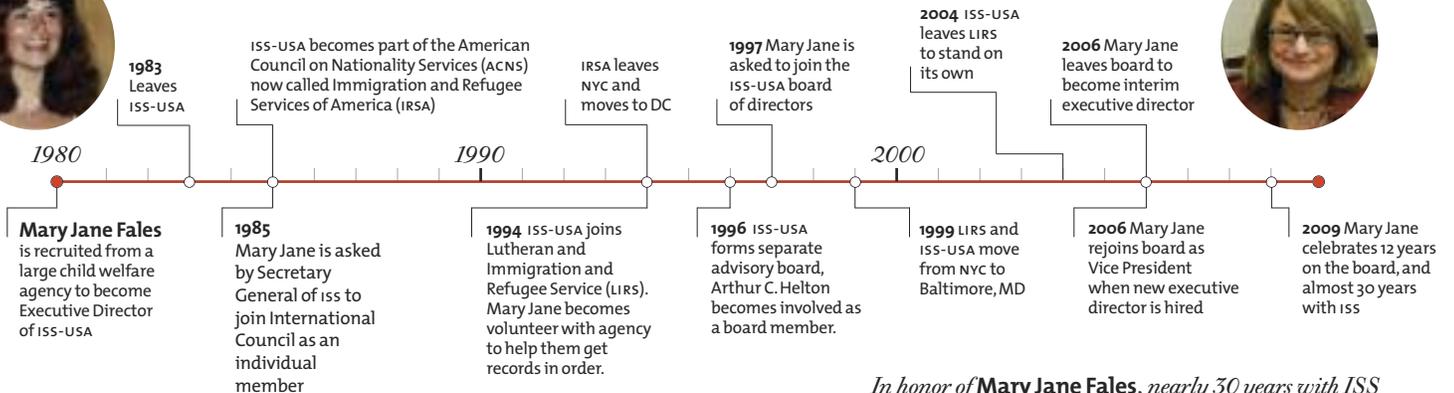
is Chairman of the Morrison Public Affairs Group (MPAG), which he founded in 2001 to conduct and supervise a broad practice involving strategic advice and representation for both domestic and international clients. He is a former Member of Congress (CT-3, 1983-91) and former Chairman of the Federal Housing Finance Board.

ALEXANDER PAPACHRISTOU

is president of the Near East Foundation, a U.S. NGO founded in 1915 that mobilizes communities in peril in the Middle East and Africa to overcome conflict, climate change and migration. He graduated from Princeton University and Harvard Law School.

JAMES R. CALVIN

Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Management and Organizational Systems, and Director of the Leadership Development Program (LDP) for Minority Managers at the Carey Business School, Johns Hopkins University and an Executive Board Member of the Center for Africana Studies.



In honor of Mary Jane Fales, nearly 30 years with ISS

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