

Liberia

**Welcome to the Americans for African Adoptions, Inc.
Joyful World Ministries, Inc. dba: All Age Adoptions Plus
Liberian Program
January 2018**

In July 2015 the Government of Liberia (GOL) began to re-open adoptions, first requiring US licensed agencies to apply, then to establish their own orphanage and to be Hague accredited or attached to a Hague agency.

Americans for African Adoptions (AFAA) and Joyful World Ministries, Inc. (JWM) are one of two agencies originally approved to restart Liberian adoptions - we have more than 54 years of combined adoption experience.

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HISTORY OF AMERICANS FOR AFRICAN ADOPTIONS (AFAA)

Every child deserves a bed and a family to tuck them into that bed. Americans for African Adoptions, Inc. (AFAA) was developed because of *one* African boy who spent three years, alone, in the desert of the Sahara, begging for food and shooting birds from trees with his homemade slingshot – *his bed was the sand*. The boy was losing his battle to stay alive until the day he saw a blond woman with a couple of men with large cameras. He figured he would beg from the strangers and be okay for a few days, maybe even a week. He didn't know his life was about to change.

The blond woman was Diane Sawyer, then of 60 Minutes. She “interviewed” the boy who could speak English, plus five other languages, but could not read or write in any language. On August 11, 1985, 18 seconds of the interview was included in a 60 Minutes story about the repeat cycle of famine in the West African country of Mali. Those 18 seconds saved the boy's life,

“Where do you sleep”, the blond woman asked. **“Here”,** the boy said, **“On the ground?”** she continued. **“Yes”,** he answered. **“Are you hungry?”** **“Yes”,** he said. **“All the time?”** she wanted to know. **“Yes, many children's they are dead.”** **“You have seen many children die?”** the woman asked again. **“Yes”,** the boy confirmed.

Cheryl Carter-Shotts, of Indianapolis, Indiana, was watching the 60 Minutes story about the Malian famine and the boy crawled into her heart. For three nights, as she was falling asleep, Cheryl wondered aloud to her husband, Charlie, **“Do you think that little boy has eaten today?”** On the 4th morning Cheryl told Charlie, **“I don't understand but that boy is my son and I have to find my son and help him or bring him home.”**

Cheryl knew nothing about Africa or international adoption, and nothing about the boy. She quit her work and devoted every waking minute to finding the boy. It was 1985 and Cheryl quickly ran up \$3,000 in phone calls and wrote Senator Richard Lugar and Diane Sawyer's secretary. Early one evening Ms. Sawyer called and they spoke for an hour as Cheryl tried to learn about the boy. **“He is handicapped – did you see that? He was alone with no family”,** Diane volunteered. Senator Lugar referred Cheryl's pleading letter for help to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff.

Cheryl and Charlie maxed out their credit cards, used every dime they had saved for a better car and borrowed \$7,000 so Charlie could head off to the Sahara, hoping to find Mohammed with the help of missionaries in the story.

On December 7, 1985, the boy, Cheryl had identified as “her son”, stepped off a plane, in Indianapolis, Indiana with his new father, into the arms of his new mother.

“Mohammed” was 5’4” tall, weighed 65 pounds and was head to-toe medical problems. He looked about 9 or 10 years old but doctors estimated he was 13 or 14. Mohammed thought he had been brought to America to be Cheryl’s “house boy”. When Cheryl explained that he had been brought to America to be her son – Mohammed said he “didn’t know what that meant but promised to learn.” *He added that he “thought these must be special people if they will go across the world for a house boy.”*

Within days of arriving in America, Mohammed was talking about his friend, “Nimit”, who was left behind in the Sahara. Mohammed wanted Nimit to have a family too so Cheryl set out to find Nimit a family. Cheryl decided that she *had* to help other African children, besides Mohammed and Nimit and the idea for “**Americans for African Adoptions, Inc. (AFAA)**” was born.

On October 12, 1986, **60 Minutes** aired another story - this story was about Mohammed being found in the Sahara; with his new family, how he was undergoing multiple surgeries, donated by renowned orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Terry Trammell (who rebuilt the bodies of Indy Car drivers) and how his life, with his new family, was unfolding in his new country of America.

On December 19, 1986 AFAA officially became licensed as an Indiana adoption agency with the sole focus of helping African orphans. On February 19, 1987, AFAA became a registered 501(c)(3) IRS charity. In 2006, Senator Richard Lugar awarded Cheryl the “Congressional Angels in Adoption award”.

In February 1990, Cheryl was in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and photographed a tiny girl sitting on a sidewalk – she looked starved, and was filthy. Cheryl tried, but couldn’t find her family to arrange sponsorship. A year later, Cheryl returned to Addis and with the help of the photo and another child, found the little girl who looked worse than the year before. Cheryl learned that at five or six years of age the girl was a street beggar and was also washing clothes by hand and scrubbing floors to earn coins to support her mother, her mother’s boyfriend, her half-sister and her elderly grandmother. “Kelem” was also watching soldiers kill people in the streets as rebels were seven miles down the road. On March 2, 1991 Cheryl was able to bring Kelem to America and found that she weighed only 28 pounds and fit into 2T clothing.

Today, Kelem is a healthy young woman who spent four years in the US Air Force as an FAA air traffic controller, doing one tour in Iraq, because she said, *“I owe America”*. She is a 2012 graduate of the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University where she was elected president of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. Today Kelem is a financial analyst for McKinsey & Company in New York.

Because of those 18 seconds, Mohammed is a healthy adult. Five donated major

surgeries rebuilt his body and on May 23, 1998, Mohammed graduated from the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University while “Dateline” taped for a future story. Today, Mohammed works for the US government in Washington and is a husband and father. He continues to speak six languages and *his birthday is August 11, the day Cheryl saw 18 seconds of Mohammed on 60 Minutes.*

Because of Mohammed, AFAA began as a small agency with a big heart for African orphans. Because of very limited funds AFAA continues to be small. To date AFAA has brought 724 African orphans from Mali, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Uganda, Lesotho and two special needs orphans from Mogadishu, Somalia, to new families across the US, Canada, France and New Zealand.

HISTORY OF JOYFUL WORLD MINISTRIES, INC. ALL AGE ADOPTIONS PLUS

In the world of mental health, children who behave differently are diagnosed, put on behavior modification programs and medication. Families that have problems due to poverty, violence, illness, addiction, and other traumas, often find they are unable to care for their children or they lose their children to “the US foster care system”. Most of these children just need a home and a family to love them. And the families just need a little extra help to be able to care for their children.

After more than 20 years of working in the mental health field, Cathrine Troy knew there was a better way for families and children to be happy, healthy and joyful. In 1992, she left her job as Program Director of one of the first Attachment Model Residential Treatment Centers for Children and founded Joyful World Ministries, Inc. a private, non-denominational, non-profit ministry to serve children and families.

One of the first major undertakings was to be licensed as a Child Placement Agency as All Age Adoptions Plus. The license has been in good standing since August 1994. The first two infants adopted in the US, and the first toddler adopted internationally, are now in college. JWM has helped more than a thousand children join with families, locally and worldwide.

All Age Adoptions Plus keeps up with the many changes in adoption requirements and have completed adoptions for the agency, and has helped with home studies and adoptions for family adoptions, independent adoptions, interstate adoptions and international adoptions for every country that has adopted children to the United States. In October 2014 All Age Adoptions Plus/Joyful World Ministry became the first agency in New Mexico to become Hague Accredited, allowing the agency to provide services for international adoptions through Hague requirements.

The staff and board of directors are adoptees and adoptive parents, who have a heart for adoption and an understanding of its many viewpoints.

Cathrine's two sons were in the first group of Liberia children to be adopted from the "AFAA House" in Liberia, through Americans for African Adoptions. They came as toddlers and are now in high school. Her daughter, who is now a college student, was adopted from China as a one year old.

AFAA IN LIBERIA

In 2000, Cheryl traveled again to Liberia, during their ongoing war and was able to meet with Liberian government officials about helping Liberian orphans. Cheryl established the AFAA House – a rental home, turned orphanage, for Liberian orphans who lost their parents in the war. In 2003 the first Liberian Angel joined their new family with Cheryl escorting children to their new families, frequently returning to Liberia during their many civil wars.

On December 2, 2003, Cheryl brought two beautiful Liberian toddler boys to their new mother in New Mexico -- Cathrine Troy (founder and director of Joyful World Ministries, Inc. dba, All Age Adoptions Plus). Today the boys are strong, healthy, happy teenagers!

On January 26, 2009, the "Government of Liberia (GOL) suspended adoptions because of allegations of mismanagement and corruption in the adoption process." The GOL closed orphanages - the AFAA House orphanage was allowed to continue and the GOL continued to place special needs orphans with AFAA. As AFAA could not place children during the suspension, funds to operate quickly grew more and more scarce.

One of the parents, who previously adopted two AFAA/Liberian children, is a youth minister. In July 2014 he formed a group to help support the AFAA House children. They painted the leased orphanage, replaced the roof, added solar panels, replaced the electrical, repaired the septic lines and built a playground structure.

Unfortunately the group who helped and supported the AFAA House had to end their support and AFAA/JWM MUST find \$6,000 every month to support the children and staff. Cheryl and Cathrine are open to, and grateful for, any and all donations to care for and support the children at the AFAA House. \$40 a month helps sponsor a child.

SOME OF OUR CHILDREN ON THE FRONT PORCH OF THE AFAA HOUSE



OUR AFAA HOUSE SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

To date AFAA has placed 724 healthy individual and sibling children, from multiple African countries, including some special needs, “African Angels” with spina bifida, major burns, TB of the spine, missing and deformed limbs, clubfeet, blind, deaf, mute, polio, heart problems, Hepatitis B, HIV+, Cerebral Palsy, and a girl who had picked up a land mine.

As with all older & internationally adopted children (even children placed as newborns), some adjust easily and attach to their new families with love and ease and some may demonstrate symptoms of grief with Reactive Attachment Disorder, PTSD, other emotional problems and undiagnosed medical problems. Just as giving birth to a child means there are no guarantees--adopting an African Angel comes with no guarantees.

Most children are happy to be adopted but not always - a few come to new families and sometimes struggle to adjust. Children come to a new world by way of devastation and loss. All of the children are of Black African descent and the children are being raised Christian once they come into the AFAA House orphanage.

AFAA CHILDREN ENJOYING LUNCH IN THE FRONT YARD



We currently have waiting Liberian children in the AFAA House, from ages 2 to 13 years of age; healthy and special needs that need families including siblings and cousins that would like to stay together.

WHO MAY ADOPT

The Government of Liberia requires adoption applicants to comply with the adopting family's home study agency, their state or province of residence regulations, USCIS or Canadian immigration and Hague and Liberian government requirements for adoption. The age of adopting parents is of normal childbearing age related to the child with some flexibility allowed by the GOL. Length of marriage is flexible. If a couple is married, both spouses must adopt. Single woman and large families are considered, by the GOL.

THE ADOPTION PROCESS

1. **The application.** Complete the JWM/AFAA application and send the original to JWM, along with the application fee of \$400, and a copy to AFAA.
2. **Liberian Service and Policy Agreement Contract.** When your application is approved, send the original "Liberian Service and Policy Agreement Contract" to JWM, and a copy of the Contract, along with the \$1250 Humanitarian Aid Donation to AFAA. The Humanitarian Aid Donation fee for Liberia American families is \$500.
3. **Your home study.** If you live in New Mexico, JWM will complete your home study.

If you live outside of New Mexico there is a \$500 Interagency Fee that is paid at the time you chose your homestudy agency. If you do not have an agency, JWM will help you choose a Hague accredited agency and provide that agency with guidelines for completing the study. Some of the documents you need for your home study will also be needed by AFAA for your dossier. Ask your home study provider if they will accept AFAA's medical and financial form, and notarized reference letters in lieu of their forms. Your home study agency will send a draft of your home study to JWM prior to its approval.

4. **First US Program Fee.** When your home study is complete, send your first US Program Fee of \$2000 to AFAA.
5. **The children.** JWM and/or AFAA will send you pictures and brief descriptions of waiting children that match your home study approval.

If you express interest in a child or children we will provide you with all known information regarding the child. Please note that often information is limited. You will have two weeks to say yes or no to the referred child. When you agree to the referred child please send your signed Full-Disclosure Form and agreement to accept the placement back to JWM. If there isn't a waiting child you are able to accept, you will be added to our waiting parent list.

Because adoption is about finding families for children, and not children for families, we cannot predict when a child who meets your desires comes to us in need of a family, although children come in to AFAA care every few months.

6. Second Program Fee. At the time you agree to a child(ren) send the following fees.

\$4700 Liberian Fee for one child & \$3000 for each additional child;
\$2700, the second part of the \$7200 of the US fee;
\$750, ½ of \$1500 for each child’s Orphanage fee;
\$375 school fee for each child that is age four years and up.

7. Processing. Once AFAA has your complete dossier it will be sent to Liberia. **From the time your Dossier arrives in Liberia, the time estimate until you can travel to Liberia is in the 9 to 12 month range.** It is a slow and careful process.

As your dossier is processed in Liberia, and your dossier is submitted to the Ministry handling the child’s case history you will be invoiced the remaining \$2700 US Program Fee and the remaining \$750 Orphanage Fee for each child. If you are adopting more than one child these fees will be invoiced at the same time.

8. USICS Approval. Apply to USCIS with form I-600-A. www.uscis.gov. Use one form for your family, **NOT** for each child. Attach your approved home study, all other required documents and the application fee to your I600-A and mail it to the USCIS Lockbox on the form. **Please have AFAA or JWM review your I-600-A before you send it.** USCIS will send you the time and place for everyone in your home eighteen years and older to be fingerprinted. We can send you dossier to Liberia prior to your USCIS approval. Your USCIS approval is valid for 18 months. You will send USCIS fees directly to USCIS with your application.

9. Your Liberia Dossier.

Once AFAA has your complete dossier to send in to Liberia, the time estimate until you can travel to Liberia is in the 9 to 12 month range.

Some of these documents will overlap with documents that your home study agency needs. **Your dossier needs to include the following:**

- _____ The JWM/AFAA Financial Application - **original and 1 copy.**
- _____ Birth certificate copies for each parent - **6 copies.**
- _____ Marriage certificate - **6 copies.**
- _____ Divorce decree or spouse death certificate for each parent, if applicable – **6 copies.**
- _____ Autobiographies from each parent about important life experiences, **signed, dated - original and one copy.**

- _____ Current, **signed** Federal returns (*no state returns*) & W-2's - **6 copies**
- _____ A local, state and national and state criminal history clearance for each person in your home 18 years and older - **original and 5 copies.**
- _____ A child abuse clearance for everyone 18 years old and older in your home - **original and 5 copies.**
- _____ A medical exam for each parent using the JWM/AFAA form - **original and 5 copies.**
- _____ A typed, brief statement from your general practitioner on their letterhead for each parent, stating the parent is approved for an international adoption - **original and 3 copies.**
- _____ A letter from your employer, on company letterhead, verifying your employment and annual salary – **original and 5 copies.**
- _____ Verification of medical insurance for each person in your home, including your future adopted child - **2 copies.**
- _____ Six, typed, dated and signed, **one page** reference letters - 3 from relatives and 3 from non-relatives - **originals and 5 copies of each letter.**
- _____ Hague approved home study, **7 originals signed and notarized.**
- _____ Casual photos of each person in your home **AND** the main rooms of your home - **1 set of color originals**
- _____ Passport copies (in color) for each parent - **4 copies.**
- _____ Color, passport photos of each parent - **4 original, color, each parent.**
- _____ A one page, dated, typed letter to the GOL, signed by both parents about why you want to adopt a Liberian child - **original and 4 copies.**

9. Your Dossier in Liberia. The Government of Liberia, and the AFAA Liberian attorney, and AFAA House orphanage director will work together on the multiple steps to prepare your file for Liberian government approval and then the Liberian High Court. Your Liberian adoption finalizes in the Liberian High Court, when you are in Liberia, which allows your child to be an automatic US citizen. Adoptive parents will be required to appear in front of the judge. We will notify you as soon as we know regarding when you need to travel. All adoption fees must be paid to AFAA prior to traveling.

10. The wait. AFAA will Federal Express (or hand deliver if someone is traveling) your dossier to Liberia. Once your dossier is at the Liberian Ministry of Gender and related Ministries, AFAA and JWM have no control over how long it takes to process your paperwork and the child's paperwork.

The time estimate before you can travel to Liberia is 9 to 12 months after we receive 100% of your documents.

We cannot control this nor can we speed it up. It is a very careful and deliberate

process with many agencies involved. Contacting the US Embassy or the Government of Liberia will not speed things up, and may complicate your adoption.

11. **Travel:** One adopting parent **MUST** travel for three to four weeks, possibly a little longer. During this time you will go to court and have the adoption finalized. You will process your child's US visa at the US Embassy with an I-600 form (one for each child), and an exit letter for your child from the Liberian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. **You will NOT be alone.** *You will be assisted during your time in Liberia by our AFAA House orphanage director. Your child can be with you during the time you are in Liberia.*

12. **Now that you are home.** Post adoption supervision and reports by your agency are requested by Liberia. You will be sent a "Now that you are Home" packet explaining what you will need to assure that your child's documentation is all in place.

LIBERIAN PROGRAM
JOYFUL WORLD MINISTRIES, INC.
AMERICANS FOR AFRICAN ADOPTIONS, INC.
INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION FEES & ESTIMATED COSTS
December 2017

LIBERIA	Fees
Application fee:	\$400
<p>JWM Home study:</p> <p>for New Mexico residents:</p> <p>Out-of-State residents:</p> <p>Inter-agency Fee four out-of-state families</p>	<p>\$2000 + travel</p> <p>Fee determined by home study agency</p> <p>\$500</p>
<p>Humanitarian Aid Donation: Mail with Service Policy and Agreement. US Tax-deductible for Humanitarian Aid Fund. Donations are used for humanitarian aid projects and each family will be given a receipt for this donation.</p> <p>This donation is received by JWM and AFAA - it may go to the AFAA House and vehicle, free counseling to expectant or birth families, local families in need, towards special needs and/or family adoptions, and/or to a humanitarian aid project at the agencies' discretion.</p>	<p>\$1250 for adopting families.</p> <p>Waived for special needs adoptions.</p> <p>\$500 for Liberian/American families</p>
<p>US Agency Fee: The fees received by AFAA & JWM covers agencies cost to facilitate your adoption with Liberian orphanages, foster homes, US agencies, Liberian attorneys & government officials in the United States and Liberia. This fee includes; 2 hours of Hague training, post-placement processing & shipping; personnel costs to include training; administrative overhead; filing fees; US operational costs; communication with Liberia;</p>	<p>\$7400 one child \$3000 for each additional related or unrelated child.</p>

<p>child referrals; dossier preparation; assistance with USCIS forms & applications, communication, publications costs associated with providing adoption services in-country.</p>	<p>\$3600 for one special needs child with a \$3800 grant from JWM/AFAA</p>
<p>International Fees: Includes dossier review for orphanage, multiple Liberian government Ministries, Liberian lawyer, adoption decree and court; Liberian government officer's investigation and report; orphanage investigation of the child's background, family and any known witnesses involved; child's initial medical exam and HIV, Hepatitis B and Sickle Cell tests. The child's original birth certificate, 2nd birth certificate with adopting family's last name. Death certificates and/or legal abandonment and/or relinquishment documents, of biological parents. Child's Liberian passport. Obtaining, copying records and/or documents required to complete the adoption and other documents related to the adoption; notarization; international shipping; representing adoptive parents with various Liberian Ministries including the Foreign Affairs Ministry, includes personnel costs, administrative overhead, operational costs, coordination and communication costs and miscellaneous costs associated with providing adoptive services in Liberia. There are no translation fees as English is the national language.</p> <p>These fees are received by:</p> <p>GOL Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection. AFAA House Orphanage Director - Oretha D. James SALT Physical Therapy Clinic - if needed The Kemp and Associates Legal Consultancy Chambers, Inc. GOL Judicial Branch of the Montserrado County Probate Court GOL Ministry of Health & Social Welfare GOL Birth Certificate Office GOL Death Certificate Office GOL Ministry of Foreign Affairs GOL Immigration Department Liberian Police - if necessary Liberian doctors, clinics, nurses, x-ray technicians, etc.</p>	<p>\$4700 one child \$3000 for each additional child</p>

<p>Orphanage Child Care Fee for children living at the AFAA House: Estimated expenses for care of <i>one child</i> in the AFAA House in Liberia prior to the adoption, including, but not limited to expenses for food, medical care, clothing, shelter, utilities, staffing and other services provided directly for a child. <i>This fee only applies if your child is in the AFAA House</i></p> <p>Education fees for children at the AFAA House: Private Christian school tuition, uniforms and supplies - age 4 and up.</p>	<p>\$1500 per child</p> <p>\$375 per child, per year</p>
<p>Post-decree:</p> <p>Three home visits and reports for the first year for Liberia and assistance with the Recognition of Foreign Adoption decree and birth certificate</p> <p>New Mexico Residents pay to JWM:</p> <p>Out of State Residents pay to home study agency</p>	<p>\$1,000</p> <p>Fee set by home study agency</p>

Additional and Estimated Third Party Fees, not covered in the Program Fees above and paid directly by the adopting family (known fees are added):

USCIS I-600A per family + fingerprints for two adults -(please check USCIS for any changes in fees). (\$775, plus \$85 biometric per person).

USCIS I-600 form for each, non-sibling, unrelated child - No charge for one child; family pays US Embassy in Liberia for each, non-sibling, additional child \$775 -- please check USCIS for any fee changes.

Additional Hague training through your home study agency or online (\$100 - \$500)

US parents passports and two passport photos for each parent. (approximately \$135-\$165 for the passport and \$10-\$20 per two pictures (please check USCIS for any fee changes.)

US Parents Liberian Visas – paid to Liberian Embassy in DC. The Liberian visa is good for three months - \$131. (Please check Liberian Embassy in DC for any fee changes.)

Child’s US visa – families pay to the US Embassy in Liberia. (\$325.00 per child).

Recognition of the Foreign Adoption decree or Re-adoption - United States attorney fees, court fees and US birth certificates – (fees are dependent on your state of residency and your attorney of choice and may not be required - again depends on your state.)

USCIS Certificate of Citizenship – if the child arrives with an IR-4 Visa the cost is \$1170 BUT since Liberian adoptions are final – children will be an automatic US citizen as long as one adopting parent has seen the child(ren) BEFORE the adoption is finalized in the Liberian High Court. No charge for a citizenship certificate when a child has an IR-3 visa.

Travel and Accommodation, meals and other personal in-country expenses:

Traveler's vaccinations & Malaria medication (please consult your health dept. and/or health care provider and/or with your medical insurance.)

Air travel - (One trip, by at one parent, . \$1900-\$3000 round trip)

Basic guesthouse estimate - \$75 a day

Guest House Meals, per meal, per person - estimate of \$20 a meal, each person

Other guest houses and hotels are available - up to about \$375 a night.

In-country transportation — paid to orphanage director for fuel & car rental - \$50 for a full day of service.

Internet and phone services - estimate of \$25 a day.

Gifts and souvenirs – at your discretion