



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

News Release

January 22, 2007

Chinese Orphan Among Newest U.S. Citizens *Child "Left to Die...Destined to Live" Hits Another Hallmark in His Short Life*

HONOLULU, HI – On January 10, officials at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Honolulu District Office issued a Certificate of Citizenship to another amazing immigrant, a child whose heartbreaking, yet inspirational story has resulted in a chain of compassionate events throughout the world.

Levi Bentley became a U.S. citizen just hours before a new book on his miraculous story *Saving Levi – Left to Die...Destined to Live* (www.savinglevi.com) was released. He arrived for the interview at the Honolulu District Office with his adoptive mother, Lisa Bentley. District Adjudications Officer Rori Del Rosario noted that the 4-year-old's smile and laughter were infectious. "It was amazing to hear him talking up a storm," Del Rosario said, "especially realizing that at just a few weeks old he arrived at an orphanage run by a U.S. Citizen couple in China with burns over 70% of his body and left in a burial shroud to die."

Lisa said, "After the long flight from China, Levi and I were exhausted when we arrived at the USCIS office in Hawaii for our interview. But the staff there is wonderful and actually made facing a bureaucracy after our long trip an incredibly pleasant experience!" She is amazed at the impact of this citizenship journey on her youngest son. "This is an incredible time in Levi's life. He so happy and proud to be a U.S. citizen and he marches around announcing 'I'm a citizen, I'm a citizen!' Although he's very young and you'd expect him to be clueless about what's happening, he understands the importance of both this and his adoption."

Lisa Bentley and John, her husband, gave up a comfortable life in Washington State to become cofounders of an orphanage called Harmony Outreach, and conduct outreach to orphans in China. While in China their family has expanded to six children, including Levi and a Chinese daughter. Their spirit of unconditional love is reflective of the story of America, where we welcome more immigrants into the tapestry of this nation than any other country in the world.

Each year more than a half-million individuals become U.S. citizens and about one-million immigrants become lawful permanent residents ("green card" holders).

– USCIS –

On March 1, 2003, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services became one of three legacy INS components to join the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. USCIS is charged with fundamentally transforming and improving the delivery of immigration and citizenship services, while enhancing our nation's security.