U.S. Adoptions of Foreign Positive Children Increasing

September 3, 2008

An increasing number of American families are adopting HIV-positive children from Ethiopia, The Associated Press (AP) reports. According to the sub-Saharan African country's U.S. embassy, Americans have adopted 25 positive Ethiopian children so far this year, up from seven the previous fiscal year.

Reasons for adopting these children range from desire to destigmatize the virus to religious motivations. For some, like elementary school teacher Julie Hehn from Edmonds, Washington, the child's HIV status hardly played a role.

"I was just scrolling through these pictures, and I saw the photo of Tsegenet, and I said, 'Oh my God, that's my daughter,'" said Hehn, 53. "I fell in love with Tsegenet, and it just happens she's HIV positive."

While Ethiopia is leading the charge in this adoption trend—primarily because the country is already an established adoption hub—the AP reports that U.S. adoption of positive children is also on the rise in countries such as Ghana, China, Haiti and Russia.

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