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Parker, Christine D

Sent: Thursday, February 10, 2011 8:33 AM
To: Parker, Christine D; Rupp, Abigail M; Fitzpatrick, Agata D
Subject: Hope complaint

RELEASED IN PART B6

From a concerned PAP who processed a case through Hope recently.

Privacy/PII

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Robert Strand, Senior Reviewer

From: [Redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, February 09, 2011 9:31 PM
To: Ladenson, Jeffrey L
Subject: RE: our agency

Thank you. Here are a few bullet points of my concerns:

- they frequently give referrals that are not "paper ready". I believe that this is because they receive half of their payment at referral so that is \$5,000 they receive at that time. There are several issues with this including the heart break that parents experience when they are later told they will be possibly waiting one year or more (if it ever happens) for their child.
- they are very slow to get children paper ready. One good question would be to ask people how long their children have been waiting in the orphanage. Some people have waited 2 years from referral meaning the parents have stared at a picture of their child for 2 years. That means the child lived there much longer than that contributing to a whole host of mental health problems for the child, difficulties for the family as a whole and makes international adoption seem to others as a problematic option. [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- While at the orphanage, I saw donations come in and they were never given to the children. Donations I brought were never seen by me again. I believe that my witnessing of such events was part of the reason they wanted me to leave. There was a room of children about 1 year old that were all sitting in a circle staring at each other not moving. There were no toys. We are all told to bring donations of toys when we come. As families, we often have to pay for extra luggage to do so. These donations are not being given to the children.
- They are very understaffed considering the money that families provide as part of their fees and considering how inexpensive it is to hire additional help. I counted a one in twelve ratio of nannies to children. My daughter has scars from diaper rash. I saw children suffering from severe dehydration. Medicine for hydration is not that expensive either. It is clear that it is run like a business with the bottom dollar in mind, not children. After visiting the orphanage, there were people in the group I was with that could not sleep that night. Their children no longer lived at the orphanage and it still haunted them. There are way worse conditions at other orphanages, I realize, but it is not what it should be. They have a transition house where they house children after court so their families pick them up at the transition house which has about a one in four ratio and many toys. So many parents have no idea about the conditions where their children actually lived.

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I am not alone in my concerns. If you would like to hear from other families please let me know. There has been so much pain caused by this agency. But most do not know the problems with this agency until they already have a referral and then your too emotionally and financially invested to back out. Thank you for your time. I apologize for the lengthy email. I know from being at embassy that you have many families that you serve and are very busy.

Sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

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Subject: RE: our agency
Date: Mon, 7 Feb 2011 08:02:22 +0300
From: LadensonJL@state.gov
To: [Redacted]

[Redacted]

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Thanks for the email. I realize that asking you to speak candidly at the consular window is often not the time and place to do so. Please let me know what is on your mind.

Regards,
Jeff

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [Redacted]
Sent: Saturday, February 05, 2011 5:21 AM
To: Ladenson, Jeffrey L
Subject: our agency

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Hi Jeff,

Something has been weighing on me since I returned to the USA. When I had my interview, I did not feel as though I could be forthcoming about the difficulties we had with our agency because a representative was standing right there. If you would like to talk candidly about the agency and it would be at all beneficial, please let me know. I fear that it is inept and unethical agencies such as these that will shut down adoption in Ethiopia and I would rather risk the hundreds of adoptions they complete annually to save the thousands of orphans that are adopted out each year.

Thank you,

[Redacted signature]

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Christine Parker
Deputy Consular Section Chief