

World Orphan Week

I saw on my calendar that the first week in March is World Orphan Week. The subject of orphans leads to the topic of children in need, which leads to dependent children, which leads, ultimately, to the discussion of adoption. This month's blog post, therefore, will touch on adoption, but first, back to World Orphan Week (WOW).

WOW was established in 2005 by a British children's charity called SOS Children's Villages UK. This organization works in 134 countries and territories around the world, including the United Kingdom and the United States. The United States' first WOW was in 2008.

WOW's purpose is to draw attention to the suffering of the tens of millions orphaned and abandoned children in the world today and raise money for programs benefitting these children. To learn more information about WOW specifically, please visit their website at www.sos-childrensvillages.org. Interested individuals can follow the US, Canadian or UK affiliates on social media, sponsor a child, or sponsor an entire village of children through the website.

Closer to home, there are hundreds of children in the Philadelphia area looking for forever homes. People traditionally associate adoption with healthy but unplanned babies, but that is only a small percentage of adoptable children. There are many dependent children in the foster care system ready for adoption, "orphans" in the most traditional sense. They need families who are ready and willing to adopt. Age plays a huge factor in many of the difficult to place children because they are considered too old. Other reasons these children aren't adopted are because they are of a minority group, a group of siblings or the children is facing physical or mental challenges. They need forever homes just as much as those healthy babies we usually think of in the adoption context.

For people interested in finding out more about children in the local foster care system, call your county Department of Children, Youth and Families. In Philadelphia, it is the Department of Human Services or DHS. In New Jersey, it is the Department of Children and Families. Another excellent source is Philadelphia's Adoption Center, www.adopt.org, or 1-800-TO-ADOPT.

There are many different types of adoptions, and most involve children other than infants. There can be international adoptions, interstate adoptions, step-parent adoptions and even adoptions of adult children. However, if you are thinking about adoption, consider a child currently in the foster care system. Best of all, for family law attorneys, all of these adoptions have happy endings.