

My name is Dan S., and I am a teacher for the Department of Defense Dependent Schools here in Europe. I decided to adopt in 2002, and began looking for a social worker and an agency here in Europe that could help me reach that goal.

I emailed every social worker for whom I could find an address, and asked them the same questions, things that I wasn't sure about, things that I felt I needed to know to make a better decision. I got answers from most of them, and after considering what each could offer, I chose Dr. Carol Albers and Adopt-Abroad, Inc.

There were many factors that led to my decision. Dr. Albers was willing to come to my somewhat remote location to do the home study, for one thing. Her fee for the home study was about in the middle of all the social workers, but she didn't charge me extra for her travel and other incidental costs. I liked the fact that there were no "hidden" costs. Not all social workers are that "up front."

Dr. Albers always knew what I was asking, even when I didn't express it very well. She was also very prompt about replying to my email and phone messages. I never had to wait to get answers to my many questions. She also contacted me often "just to talk", to make sure that everything was going well. I really liked the personal touch.

Some of the other social workers just do your home study, but leave you "on your own" to find your own adoption agency. This means you have to do all the work yourself, and you have no one to help with actually finding a child, advocating for you with state or international agencies, and so on. You also have to figure out who's going to do the post-placement visits (if needed). The home study is just the beginning of a long process, and if that's all your social worker does for you, you're in for a lot of hassle!

Adopt-Abroad also has an office in the U.S., so that you have another worker (Melissa, who's wonderful!) taking care of the phone calls and faxes and sending of homestudies to state workers. I can't tell you how valuable that part of their service was!

As a single male wanting to adopt, and living in Europe, I found that not all agencies were willing to work with someone in my situation. Carol and Melissa helped me through the rough spots, and were very professional and knowledgeable about the field. As I get ready to go pick up my son, I know that without the help I got from Adopt-Abroad, I wouldn't be where I am today. I'm excited and happy about the changes that adoption has already brought into my life. All I can say to anyone thinking about adoption is: you will not find better people to help you build your family than the people at Adopt-Abroad. They are simply the best in Europe!

Hope that helps. Good luck along the way!