

# EARLY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT STUDY

2010 NEWSLETTER

## Research Site Update

The EGDS study is comprised of four research sites, including The Pennsylvania State University (featured in the last study newsletter), George Washington University (featured in this newsletter), Oregon Social Learning Center and University of Minnesota (UNM), Twin Cities. We are sad to report that the UMN site will be closing this summer. This site made it possible for the study to extend its recruitment efforts to a new region, and with the help of 4 adoption agencies from Minnesota and Illinois, the EGDS sample now includes many families from the Midwestern region.

The UMN staff has enjoyed working with the many people they have interviewed through this study. Birth parents who had been in contact with Kathleen O'Sullivan at the UMN site can now contact Alexis Meyers from the EGDS research site at the Oregon Social Learning Center in Eugene, Oregon. She can be reached by email at [alexism@oslc.org](mailto:alexism@oslc.org) or by phone (866) 203-5165 (toll-free).

### In Memoriam

The UMN research site was set up in 2006 under the leadership of the late Professor Xiaojia Ge. Professor Ge passed away in August of 2009 after a heroic battle with lung cancer. We know that he would be pleased that the goals for his research site have been met.



While Professor Ge is sorely missed by his family, friends, and colleagues he has left a legacy of excellence in both the way he lived his life and in the way he conducted research and taught his students. For more information about Dr. Ge's life and work follow this link: <http://www.cehd.umn.edu/icd/faculty/Ge.html>

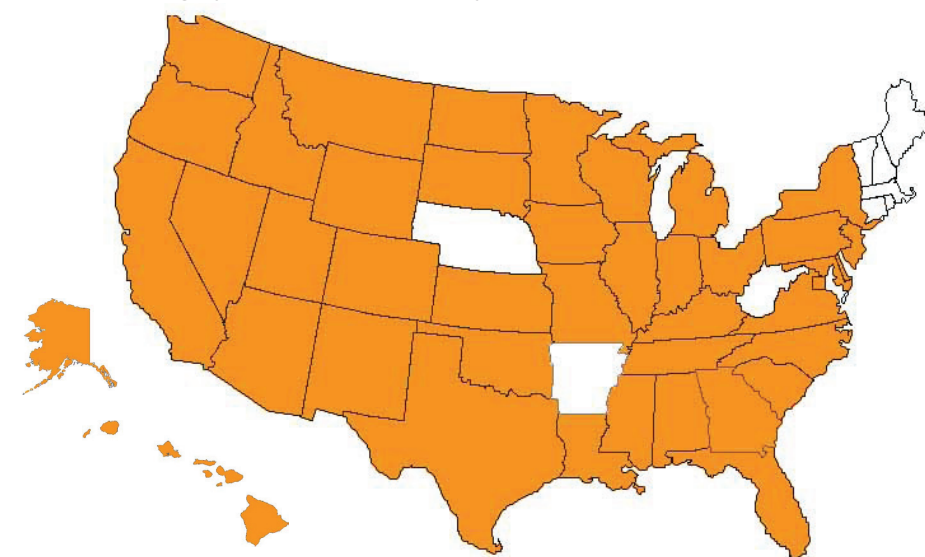
### Please Keep In Touch

We appreciate your continued participation in the study. Please call or email us if you move or change your phone number and we will send you a \$15 bonus.

You can reach Alexis Meyers toll-free at (866) 203-5165 or [alexism@oslc.org](mailto:alexism@oslc.org). We look forward to being in touch with you soon!

Our study is in its 3rd year of recruiting and interviewing participants, which means that some of our participants have been a part of the study for more than 2 years. We are happy to report that we reached our recruitment goals for the study at the end of March! We will continue to invite eligible birth fathers to participate over the course of the next two years and we will be actively interviewing enrolled families through summer 2012.

We are currently in the process of planning for the future of our study. Several of the investigators are writing grant proposals in hopes of securing funding that will allow us to continue following current participants and also invite more individuals to take part in new studies. We will keep you posted about our plans and will be in contact with many of you in the coming years to invite you to be involved in these new studies.



As of April 2010, 335 birth mothers, 99 birth fathers, and 200 adoptive families are participating. Take a look at the map to see where they are.

We now have participants from 43 states, the District of Columbia, and a few other countries!

# Research Site Spotlight

## GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

George Washington University (GWU) has been a data collection site for the Early Growth and Development Study since it was first funded in 2002. *Dr. Jody Ganiban* is the lead Investigator at GWU, as well as a proud adoptive parent. Her research interests include the development of personality and relationships, and childhood eating disorders. Dr. Ganiban's primary appointment is in the Department of Psychology at GWU, where she is also actively engaged in teaching Developmental Psychology courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The Psychology Department is also home to additional studies that examine the impact of parental depression, job loss, and poverty on families, as well as teenage parenting.

*Dr. Amy Whitesel* joined the research team in 2003 as the Recruitment Supervisor and currently serves as the Project Director. Her research interests include the study of birth parents, with a focus on birth fathers, as well as examination of birth and adoptive families' experiences with adoption agencies. Dr. Whitesel has also worked directly with members of the adoption triad since 1998.

The interviewing team at GWU visits participants up and down the east coast collecting data for the study. The interviewing research team includes, Anna, Colleen, Jessica, and Rachel. Some of you may be seeing them shortly!



Jessica received a degree in Psychology from GWU in May 2009 and officially started to work for the Early Growth and Development Study the very next day. She is currently working towards her Masters degree in School Counseling at GWU and plans to become a school counselor for elementary school students. For the study, Jessica interviews adoptive families.

Anna received a degree in Psychology from GWU and started working on the Early Growth and Development Study Phase I in 2005. In 2007, she began interviewing adoptive families and later joined the scanning team. Anna worked as an adoptive family interviewer for the first few years on the Early Growth and Development Study Phase II and she is now the GWU site supervisor and continues to interview adoptive families.



Rachel received a degree in Psychology from GWU in 2007. She has since worked for the Parent-Child Health Project at GWU examining childhood anxiety. As part of the research team she conducted play visits with children, and participated in coding videos of parent-child interactions. She has also worked for the Stress and Job Loss Project as a telephone interviewer. As an interviewer for the Early Growth and Development Study she will be interviewing both adoptive and birth parents. Rachel is now living in New York and is a graduate student at Columbia University Teachers College pursuing a degree in Mental Health Counseling.

We can only imagine your thoughts when you greet our interviewers, who carry bags full of supplies, including computers, binders, voice recorders, and all the other materials for the interview. But arriving at your home often results in sighs of relief for our interviewers, who are literally traveling around the world to meet with the participants in our study. Our interviewers have battled poor-weather road conditions, flight delays and cancellations, and the dreaded security line at the airport; however, they have had some fantastic travel experiences, too. In "A Day in the Life of an Interviewer (see below)," read about some of our interviewer's memorable travel stories.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN INTERVIEWER

### "Up in the Air"

If you're a frequent flyer or if you've seen the recent movie "Up in the Air" with George Clooney, you might understand how isolating business travel can be. I'm a shy person to begin with, so striking up a conversation with the person sitting next to me isn't usually on my "Top 10 Things to do on a Plane" list. However, when the common question "what do you do for work?" is asked, I usually get in a couple of words about the Early Growth and Development Study and then find myself listening to passionate stories about adoption. The flight attendants might think that this stranger, who is candidly pouring their heart out to me, is a relative or best friend. Before working on this study, I was naive about adoption - I had no idea how many families and lives are touched by adoption. Who would have thought meeting countless numbers of strangers would be the way I find this out?

### "No Parking!"

I came out from an interview once and my rental car was up on a tow truck! I managed to convince the tow-truck driver to take it down but I still had to pay \$50 to remove the boot on the car so I could drive to the airport. I gladly paid that \$50. Who knew that splatters of red paint meant no parking?!

### "Right Turn, Where?"

It's always an adventure when I get into my rental car, turn on the GPS system, and start to input a destination. I lack a sense of direction in places I'm familiar with, so I never know what's going to happen when I'm in a city and state I've never been to before! On one such occasion, I programmed the address into the GPS and it came up blank. As it turns out, the destination was in a brand new development that my GPS didn't recognize. So here I am, stuck somewhere I'm completely unfamiliar with and my only lifeline has no idea where I'm going. Luckily, I was able to talk to the family and they gave me an address that the GPS could find and directions from that place to their home (which, miraculously, I was able to follow). So, this may explain why some of us call you twenty times in the half hour before the interview is scheduled to start. We promise, we only do it when necessary, and thank you for being so patient with us when we do!

Our interviewers value their experiences traveling for the project. They enjoy the opportunity to visit vastly different communities and the chance to be a part of your world for a few hours. Below are some of our interviewers favorite locations to visit, but they realize that they have many more wonderful places to explore!

Alyssa	San Diego, CA
Anna	Lancaster, PA
Colleen	Panama City, FL
Denise	Charlotte, NC
Heather	Pacific Grove, CA
Hope	Chicago, IL
Jessica	Philadelphia, PA
Joanna	Charleston, SC
Lizzy	Honolulu, HI
Michelle	Seattle and Chicago
Rachel	Lancaster, PA
Tracy	Amsterdam, Netherlands