

For Immediate Release
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Ethica Founder and President Trish Maskew Departing; Successor Named

Silver Spring, Md.--Trish Maskew, president of Ethica, Inc., a nonprofit organization that advocates for ethical adoption practices, is leaving the group she founded in 2002. Melissa Griebel, current vice-president and director of domestic policy, will succeed Maskew as President on June 20, 2008.

Maskew is leaving Ethica's Board of Directors to accept a position at the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Immigration Litigation, where she will begin working this fall.

Maskew founded Ethica in the wake of the Cambodian adoption crisis, believing that there was an urgent need for an independent, unbiased advocate for children and families, free from competing financial interests, who could provide policy guidance, information and assistance to the adoption community and governmental offices. Ethica's emphasis on ethical adoption practices foreshadowed serious changes in adoption policy.

"In the past five years I've seen the adoption community progress towards recognizing and openly discussing the problems that can arise in domestic and international adoption, and begin working to improve accountability and transparency in the process," Maskew said. "While there is still much work to be done in assuring that adoption always puts the needs of the child first, progress has been made."

Under the direction of Maskew, recently dubbed "the mother of the adoption ethics movement" by an agency director, Ethica has helped more than 8,000 children and families through its crisis management, advocacy, and humanitarian initiatives. Among other issues, Ethica has advocated for the right of adoptees to obtain their original birth records, stricter oversight of both domestic and international adoptions to prevent abduction and child-buying, and better consumer protection regulations to protect families from unscrupulous adoption providers.

The organization also conducted large scale humanitarian relief efforts in Liberia and Vietnam, helped numerous families whose adoptions were in crisis, and co-sponsored a 2007 conference, "Adoption Ethics and Accountability: Doing it Right

Makes a Lifetime of Difference.” Its website, ethicanet.org, has helped educate thousands about the issues facing adoption today.

Maskew was a tireless advocate, taking calls at all hours, and laying the groundwork for Ethica's collaborations with the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Joint Council on International Children Services, Congressional Coalition for Adoption Institute, and the Hague Permanent Bureau.

“It's been a wonderfully fulfilling experience working with Ethica and seeing a real movement for ethical adoptions begin to take hold. I'm very thankful for the support I've received from the Ethica board and staff, and from so many colleagues over the years,” Maskew said.

"The Board of Directors is extremely grateful to Trish for her years of distinguished service to Ethica," said Griebel. "Her efforts have made Ethica the pioneer in advocating for ethical adoption practices and policies. As a result, Ethica has evolved into an even stronger, more vital organization on a firm course for the future. I look forward to continuing her work to advance adoption reform in the coming years."

Ethica is an independent voice for ethical adoption practices. Ethica advocates for national and international reform of unethical practices, offering support, education and advocacy to all persons affected by adoption. To maintain our independence, Ethica does not accept monetary support from anyone who places children for adoption.