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Angelina's adoption has Main Line connection

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Actress Angelina Jolie's adoption of a three-and-a-half-year-old Vietnamese boy this month was handled by a Main Line-based agency.

"She left the U.S. on the 13th, arrived there, and had her signing on the 15th," said Heidi Gonzalez, the Vietnamese program coordinator for Adoptions From the Heart (AFTH) adoption agency in Wynnewood.

Jolie applied around the New Year, and went through all the usual protocols any ordinary applicant would.

"She had a home study done in LA where she lives," Gonzalez said.



A home study is to determine whether the applicant offered a suitable environment for the orphan.

She was also fingerprinted, had to apply to the U.S. Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services and had to provide a dossier to the Vietnamese government which oversees the program.

Jolie's only stipulation was she wanted a boy, but she was not otherwise fast-tracked, Gonzalez said, and she paid no extra money to make things happen.

Gonzalez said Jolie was referred by Jane Aronson, a specialist in adoption medicine in New York. Aronson previously cared for another of Jolie's adopted children, Sahara.

Sahara is two, and came from Africa.

The movie star has also a boy from Cambodia, and a biological daughter with Brad Pitt.

Gonzalez said she talked with Jolie, but could not speak to whether she was trying to create a multi-racial family.

"I think her passion is to be a mother ... She wants to raise kids," Gonzalez said. "She wants to grow her family, she just loves children ... I don't know why she hasn't chosen to go through the U.S."

Perhaps because there might have been even less privacy and "more craziness?" Gonzalez speculated. A passport photo belonging to Jolie and other information from the "giving and receiving paperwork" was leaked.

Gonzalez said AFTH is based in the Main Line, but has 11 other offices in New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Virginia and West Virginia.

Hers' is just one of many in the U.S. licensed in Vietnam, which closed its program after 2003 to streamline and revamp it. The Vietnamese program just re-opened last year.

The relatively new specialty of adoption medicine Aronson practices has come into being because of the growing number of people searching the world for children to adopt.

"There's so many people adopting internationally," Gonzalez said.

The need to test kids from countries with less sophisticated medical protocols has led to the need for the specialty.

After she is approved to bring the child into the U.S., Jolie is expected to return to her home with Brad Pitt in LA, and their three other kids some time this week.