



Contacts:

POV Communications: 212-989-7425. Emergency contact: 646-729-4748

Cynthia López, clopez@pov.org, Cathy Fisher, cfisher@pov.org,

POV online pressroom: www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom

**POV's "Wo Ai Ni (I Love You) Mommy" Is Revealing, Intimate Account
Of One Chinese Orphan Coming to America, Tuesday, Aug. 31, 2010, on PBS**

Can an 8-year-old Girl from Guangzhou Province Find Happiness with a Jewish Family
On Long Island? Award-winning Film Uncovers Rewards and Struggles
As Fang Sui Yong Becomes Faith Sadowsky

*A Co-production of American Documentary/POV and the Diverse Voices Project,
Presented in Association with the Center for Asian American Media*

"An absorbing record of the family's first year-and-a-half together, with all its adjustments and
attachments." — Ann Hornaday, *The Washington Post*

From Donna Sadowsky's departure from her Long Island home, through 10 hectic days in China arranging the adoption of 8-year-old Fang Sui Yong and on through the girl's first year and a half in the United States, **Wo Ai Ni (I Love You) Mommy** is an intimate account of a global phenomenon — transnational and transracial adoption. Little Sui Yong's adoption takes place against a background of more and more Americans adopting overseas, especially in China. Since the Chinese opened their doors to foreign adoptions in 1992, some 70,000 Chinese children have been brought to the United States, making China the top choice for international adoptions by Americans. The trend has even spawned a stateside support organization, Families with Children From China.

The huge number of adoptions underscores the importance of investigating the varied motivations of the Chinese and of the adoptive parents, the attitudes of society toward multiracial families and the special challenges transracial adoptees face. Those challenges can be daunting and a lot to fall on the shoulders of an 8-year-old adopted girl. And Fang Sui Yong — who learns a few minutes after meeting her mother, Donna, for the very first time that her new name will be Faith Sui Yong Sadowsky — reacts as any self-respecting little girl would. She is alternately withdrawn, petulant, cute, rude, demanding, endearing, needy, manipulative, tragic, happy, loving, not so loving, confused, surprisingly perceptive about her situation — and a natural in front of the camera.

Stephanie Wang-Breal's **Wo Ai Ni (I Love You) Mommy**, the first film in the three-part *POV Adoption Stories*, has its national broadcast premiere on **Tuesday, Aug. 31, 2010**, at 10 p.m. on PBS during the 23rd season of **POV (Point of View)**. (Check local listings.) The film will be shown with the StoryCorps short animation **Germans in the Woods**. On **Wednesday, Sept. 1** at 2 p.m. ET, POV will host a live chat with Wang-Breal and Donna and Faith Sadowsky on www.pbs.org/pov.

POV Adoption Stories continue with Nicole Opper's **Off and Running** on Sept. 7 and Deann Borshay Liem's **In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee** on Sept. 14. POV's regular season airs through Sept. 21 and concludes with a fall special on Tuesday, Oct. 5. American television's longest-running independent documentary series, POV is the winner of a Special Emmy for Excellence in Television Documentary Filmmaking.

The Sadowsky family clearly has a lot of love to give. Donna and her husband, Jeff, have two biological sons and have already adopted a Chinese baby girl. Donna's maternal drive and Jeff's delight in children and interest in China lead them back to Guangzhou Province to search for another girl. Sons Jason, 15, and Jared, 12, and little Darah, now 3, are equally enthusiastic about adding a new sibling. Darah requests that her new sister be "taller," so she can remain the baby of the family. So the Sadowskys decide to adopt an older girl.

Meanwhile, in China, Fang Sui Yong, abandoned when she was 2, has found a home with a loving foster family, even forming a strong sister bond with another foster child in the family's care. Theirs is a boisterous and lively home created by parents who began taking in foster children when their own child grew up and left the house too quiet for their taste. They have formed a strong bond with Sui Yong and don't really want to give her up. But Sui Yong has disabilities — a corrected clubfoot and what Chinese doctors call "dropped wrists" — that give her some difficulty. Her foster parents believe that she has a much better chance to become self-sufficient and find opportunities to improve her life in America. And they know that at 8 years old, her chance at an international adoption is rare indeed.

But these are social calculations a little girl isn't going to make. **Wo Ai Ni (I Love You) Mommy** captures all the wrenching emotions of confusion, fear and abandonment that crowd Sui Yong's face at her very first meeting with Donna. But Donna, her father (who has accompanied her to China) and the staff of the Chinese orphanage manage to reassure her and eventually coax a smile and a bit of curiosity out of Sui Yong. It is no easy thing to be renamed suddenly, to leave one loving family for the promise of another or to be thrust into the language and cultural gaps between two civilizations. At that first meeting, the dramatic journey Sui Yong and the Sadowsky family are about to embark upon is painfully clear. Director Stephanie Wang-Breal is acutely aware of the tough road ahead, and on instinct she jumps in to serve as translator upon realizing that the Sadowskys are unable to speak Cantonese or Mandarin, the languages their new child speaks.

In true *vérité* fashion, **Wo Ai Ni (I Love You) Mommy** lets the story reveal itself. At the film's heart, Sui Yong, reborn as Faith, is a revelation of uninhibited feeling. Naturally and beautifully photogenic, she can make an ugly face, snarl brazenly or pout pitifully when the circumstances so move her. Faith is under the sway of forces beyond her command, but she is far from passive. **Wo Ai Ni (I Love You) Mommy** shines light on issues of international adoption and transracial families, but it's brightest light is a resilient little girl.

After Faith has spent 17 months in her U.S. home — and experienced numerous ups and downs, including a heartbreaking Internet video call with her Chinese foster family — **Wo Ai Ni (I Love You) Mommy** reaches a climax when this once-lost little Chinese girl blossoms into the princess of her dreams at her brother Jared's bar mitzvah. The family's belief all along has been that love can overcome — if not erase — the obstacles of adoption, even complicated cross-cultural adoption. Who says a Long Island Jewish family can't raise a happy Chinese girl from Guangzhou?

"Growing up in a white, blue-collar town made me extremely self-conscious about my race," says Wang-Breal, a first-generation Chinese-American who was raised in Youngstown, Ohio. "I was the only Chinese girl in my class of 450, and all I wanted was to be like every other Caucasian girl around me.

"I became interested in making a documentary about adoption from China. My best friend was teaching Chinese to adopted girls at the China Institute. After hearing her talk about these amazing girls, I began to wonder what it was like for them to grow up Chinese in America. I realized I wanted to make a documentary that provided insight into the child's experience, because that was a perspective that was notably absent."

Wo Ai Ni (I Love You) Mommy is a co-production of EYEWANG PICTURES, American Documentary | POV and the Diverse Voices Project, presented in association with the Center for Asian American Media, with funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

About the Filmmaker:

Stephanie Wang-Breal, Director/Producer

Stephanie Wang-Breal has been producing stories for television since 1999. She has worked with various media outlets, including CNN, MTV, the Biography Channel and UNICEF. In 2006, Wang-Breal produced and directed her first short independent film, *From Infirmity to Firmness*, about the beneficial aspects of yoga for individuals living with HIV. The film screened at the San Francisco Short Film Festival in 2007 and helped the Iyengar Yoga Institute of New York receive a grant from the Walt Disney Foundation for its free HIV-positive yoga classes. **Wo Ai Ni (I Love You) Mommy** marks Stephanie's debut as a feature documentary filmmaker.

Credits:

Director/Producer: Stephanie Wang-Breal
Consulting Producers: Judith Helfand, Jean Tsien
Editor: Gigi Wong
Cinematographers: Stephanie Wang-Breal, Donny Tam
Original Music: Paul Goldman

Running Time (with short): 86:46

POV Series Credits:

Executive Producer: Simon Kilmurry
Executive Vice President: Cynthia López

Awards & Festivals:

- San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival, 2010 – *Best Documentary*
- AFI/Discovery Channel Silverdocs Documentary Film Festival, 2010 – *Sterling Award for Best U.S. Feature*
- Asian American International Film Festival, 2010
- Berkshire International Film Festival, 2010
- Little Rock Film Festival, 2010
- Indianapolis International Film Festival, 2010
- Houston International Film Festival, 2010

StoryCorps short animation “Germans in the Woods”:

Since 2003, StoryCorps has been recording and preserving the voices of everyday people, one conversation at a time, and sharing one of these stories each week on NPR. Now, the StoryCorps team brings its Peabody Award-winning storytelling to public television in collaboration with POV with new animated shorts featuring some of the projects best-loved radio stories.

Germans in the Woods – Joseph Robertson was an infantryman in the U.S. Army during World War II, where he fought in the Battle of the Bulge. The stark black and white images in this short haunt the viewer — just as Robertson is haunted still by his memories from that battle.

* * * * *



The Center for Asian American Media (CAAM) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to presenting stories that convey the richness and diversity of Asian American experiences to the broadest audience possible. We do this by funding, producing, distributing and exhibiting works in film, television and digital media. For more information, visit www.asianamericanmedia.org.



Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and now in its 23rd season on PBS, the award-winning POV series is the longest-running showcase on American television to feature the work of today's best independent documentary filmmakers. Airing June through September, with primetime specials during the year, POV has brought more than 300 acclaimed documentaries to millions nationwide and has a Webby Award-winning online series, *POV's Borders*. Since 1988, POV has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. More information is available at www.pbs.org/pov.

POV Interactive (www.pbs.org/pov)

POV's award-winning Web department produces special features for every POV presentation, extending the life of our films through filmmaker interviews, story updates, podcasts, streaming video and community-based and educational content that involves viewers in activities and feedback. POV Interactive also produces our Web-only showcase for interactive storytelling, *POV's Borders*. In addition, the *POV Blog* is a gathering place for documentary fans and filmmakers to discuss and debate their favorite films, get the latest news and link to further resources. The POV website, blog and film archives form a unique and extensive online resource for documentary storytelling.

POV Community Engagement and Education

POV works with local PBS stations, educators and community organizations to present free screenings and discussion events to inspire and engage communities in vital conversations about our world. As a leading provider of quality nonfiction programming for use in public life, POV offers an extensive menu of resources, including free discussion guides and curriculum-based lesson plans. In addition, POV's *Youth Views* works with youth organizers and students to provide them with resources and training so they may use independent documentaries as a catalyst for social change.

Major funding for POV is provided by PBS, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, The Educational Foundation of America, New York State Council on the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, The Fledgling Fund, FACT and public television viewers. Funding for POV's *Diverse Voices Project* is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. Special support provided by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. POV is presented by a consortium of public television stations, including KCET Los Angeles, WGBH Boston and THIRTEEN in association with WNET.ORG.

American Documentary, Inc. (www.amdoc.org)

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia company dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation.



Media Sponsor:

