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WRITTEN AND PRODUCED
BY KRISSA ROSSBUND
WITH ELI BECKER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
KATHRYN GAMBLE

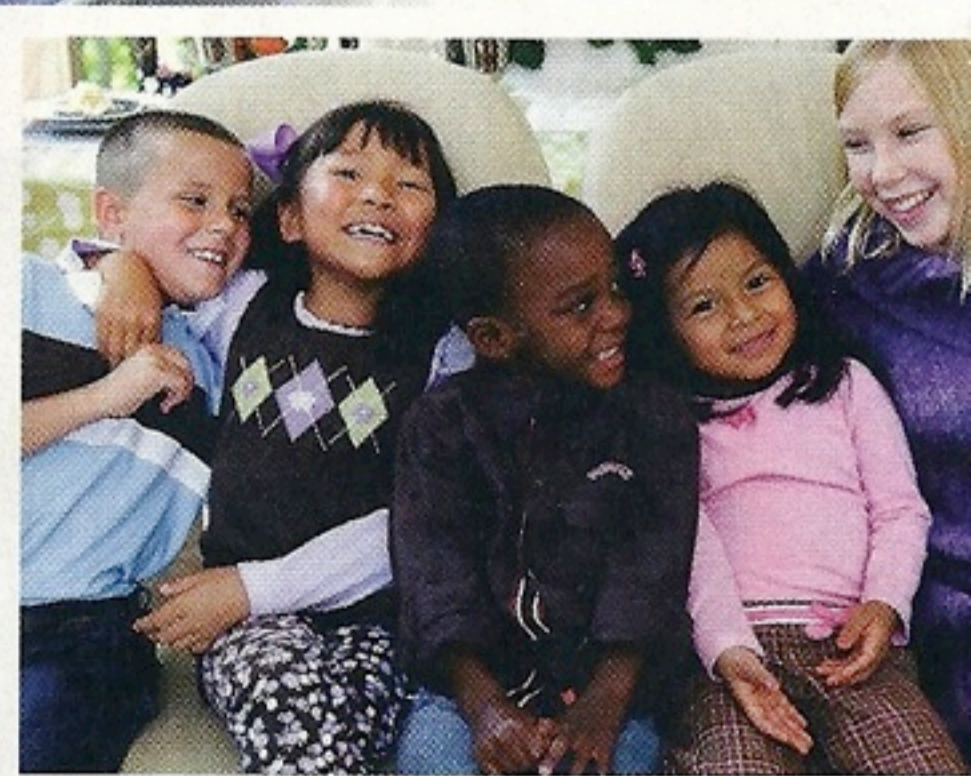


uniting nations

A JOYOUS LUNCH CELEBRATES MOTHERS WITH CHILDREN ADOPTED **FROM AROUND THE WORLD**

For a group of Des Moines-area friends, all mothers of young children, there is never a quiet moment in the conversation. Naturally, there are the requisite tales of soccer games and memorable “you won’t believe what my child said” stories, but these women share a more intimate bond that triggers a topic

close to their hearts. They’ve all adopted children—from Iowa, Texas, Florida, China, Guatemala, and Russia—in short, the world. On a glorious autumn afternoon, this multicultural group gathers for a luncheon to celebrate these beautiful children and the joy they bring to their families. ➤



Each of us has been blessed with such positive experiences from the adoptions of our children.

—NICOLLE SCHIPPERS

“Each of us has been blessed with such positive experiences from the adoptions of our children,” says attorney Nicolle Schippers, who with her husband, Greg, adopted daughter Emma from Guatemala in 2007. “We’ve had many opportunities to celebrate these special additions with our own families, but it’s fun to reflect with women who share similar experiences.”

The table scheme is imbued with youthful spirit. An apple-green-and-white linen print topper on a tailored gray silk table skirt is the springboard for an exuberant palette. White faux patent-leather placemats edged with shimmering crystal trim catch the light (and the children’s eyes).

Pewter is associated with masculine decor, but here the pewter-colored goblets were chosen for their modern edge and paired with gray-and-silver tinted crystal stemware. Glazed octagonal stoneware chargers set off plates that are decorated with painterly green flowers. The dinnerware complements ▶

SET A PRETTY TABLE with “Watercolor Citrus” dinner and salad plates from Lenox (lenox.com); pewter stoneware chargers and “Landon” wine glasses from Juliska (juliska.com); “Bubbles” champagne flutes by Saint Louis Crystal through The Silver Peacock (212/426-2610); Lobmeyr crystal candy dishes and sterling candlesticks, Kneen & Co. (kneenandco.com); “Bellini” silk table skirt and napkins, Schumacher (fschumacher.com); “Burnet” linen topper fabric, Kravet (kravet.com); “Milan” dining chairs from Century Furniture (centuryfurniture.com).



DETAILS THAT MAKE A DAY MEMORABLE

1. MENU CARDS are presented in a pretty accordion book from Rag & Bone Bindery (ragandbonebindery.com) so that guests can later fill them with photos from the day. Decorative tape from Ginko Papers (ginkopapers.com).

2. INVITATIONS from Kate's Paperie (katespaperie.com) herald a special occasion when sent by mail. Arranged on a mirror by Lladro (lladro.com), flower-filled glass bowls by Kosta Boda (kostaboda.com) make memorable favors.

3. PLACEMATS crafted from a wall covering that resembles patent leather from Stark Wallcovering are trimmed with “Ajouté” glass fringe from Samuel & Sons (samuelandsons.com). “Coco” stainless flatware from Lunt (luntsilver.com).

4. KID TREATS Juice boxes are wrapped in paper and decorated with tape, then covered with vellum for waterproofing when submerged in ice. Buckets from Macbeth Collection (macbethcollection.com). Tape from Ginko Papers.

Is anything more fun than dressing a baby girl in ribbons and bows? Tara Essman shows off her new baby, Kendall, to Colleen Biegger.



PUMPKIN SOUP

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 large onion, finely chopped (1 cup)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 2 (14-ounce) cans chicken broth
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup uncooked orzo or wild rice
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups half-and-half, light cream, or milk
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1 (15-ounce) can pumpkin
- Cracked black pepper (optional)
- Red pepper strips (optional)

In large saucepan melt butter over medium-high heat. Add onion and garlic; cook 3 to 5 minutes or until tender, stirring occasionally. Stir in crushed red pepper; cook 1 minute. Add broth; bring to boil. Stir in orzo or rice. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, about 10 minutes for orzo or 40 minutes for wild rice, or until orzo or rice is tender.

In screw-top jar combine half-and-half and flour. Cover; shake well to combine. Stir into orzo (or rice) mixture; cook and stir until slightly thickened and bubbly. Stir in pumpkin; heat through. To serve, sprinkle each serving with cracked black pepper; top with red pepper strips. Makes 6 to 8 side-dish servings.

For the menu and recipes, visit traditionalhome.com.

Above left: Susan Busing serves a ginger cake to daughter Chloe, adopted from Russia, and friend Erin Barfels' son, Chase, adopted from Florida. Tray table and cake plate, Global Views (888/956-0030). The black frosted glass vases are from Kosta Boda.

Left: Nicolle Schippers hears a secret whispered by her daughter, Emma, who was adopted from Guatemala.

the menu, which includes pumpkin soup, salmon with a soy dressing over salad greens, and scrumptious ginger cake.

The tablescapes create a sophisticated tension between invigorating apple green and sturdy pewter, one that is energized by roses and hydrangeas in bright jolts of contemporary colors—orange, raspberry, and green. Rather than offering the expected nut cups filled with nuts and mints, a lidded glass bowl at each place setting cups a bloom of green hydrangea. Elegant in their slender silhouettes, silver candlesticks nestled among the table decorations add sparkle. (For ideas on setting a special children-only table, see the video Tip Clip below.)

In the corner of the room, a white-painted tray table displays a ginger cake that's irresistible—just ask the kids. Frosted art glass vases filled with roses and hydrangeas echo the flowers on the main table, adding color to this inviting dessert station.

"During the adoption process, you make calls to talk with others who are going through the same thing," says Erin Barfels, human resources manager for an insurance company, who with her husband, Chris, welcomed son Chase to their family in 2007. "This lunch was special because it was more party than process." Although their experiences varied, the mothers agree that any way a child comes to you is a miracle. ■



AN ELEGANT TABLE is simple with these ideas that are not too formal—go to gettag.mobi on your smartphone and download the free Tag Reader app. Hold your phone over this coded tag and snap it.



NEED HELP CREATING A CHILDREN'S TABLE?

For a video with creative tips, go to gettag.mobi on your smartphone and download the free Tag Reader app. Hold your phone over this coded tag and snap it. Or view at traditionalhome.com.