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# Transitions: A Lifelong Process

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Transition is defined by the Oxford American Dictionary as "the process of change from one state or style, etc. to another." Everyone makes hundreds of transitions throughout their lifetime. Missionaries and MKs are probably more familiar with this process than many other people. Although transitions may have similarities, each experience is also unique, and individuals respond to it in their own unique way.

One way to describe the transition process is by using a five-phase model developed by Dave Pollock of Interaction. The phases are Engagement, Leaving, Transition, Entering, and Re-engagement. Defining the process can help us understand the experience better and may help us move through it more successfully ourselves and be more understanding of others going through it. Please keep in mind that, although the phases can easily be named, they are not necessarily experienced in such an easily identified sequence.

Engagement describes the period of strong involvement in your present

location. You have roots, know what is expected of you, have a support system, and have identified your role in relationship to those around you.

*Leaving* is the phase when you begin to disengage from your present life and pull up roots in anticipation of the move you expect to make. This can apply to a change of physical location as well as to a change of status or role (e.g. job change, from single to married, etc. )

*Transition* is when you make the actual move; your normal routine is upset, good-byes are said, you withdraw from the activities you have been in-

volved in and move on. Feelings of personal and professional ambiguity as to your role and your relationship with others are common during this stage.

*Entering* involves the adjustment to your new role or environment, a reestablishment of routines and personal life or identity, and becoming a learner in your new environment.

*Re-engagement* is the final step. You become familiar with your environment and are an active participant in it: developing new relationships, planning for the future, and being involved in ministry, work, and family life.

by Lynda Shingledecker

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For missionaries and MKs, their most challenging transitions usually involve moving to the field or returning to the home country. Each change can be daunting. Along with understanding the process, these additional suggestions may also help you and your family face changes with increased confidence and hope.

1) Talk about the upcoming move as a family. Understand that this transition is new for every family member. Allow each person the freedom to ask questions and to express their feelings. Younger children often reflect the attitudes of their parents so it is important to remember that you set the tone for your family. Good communication is always important and may need to be even more intentionally encouraged during times of transition.

2) Whether you are going to the field or returning to your passport country, investigate where you are going and consider how your life will change once you get there. Talk to those who have lived/are living there, research the country or culture through the Internet, encyclopedias, videos, or books. Take advantage of multicultural events that provide

**Transitions,** continued on page 2



**Transitions,** *continued from page 1* exposure to different language and culture. Make plans regarding how to integrate into the new community, make friends, learn the language, or get involved with a church. Remember that returning to your passport country may feel more like going to a foreign country to your children. Thinking through these things can help make the integration process easier when you actually arrive.

3) Look for the best ways to keep in contact with the significant people you leave behind. Today's technology has made communication easier, faster, and more reliable than ever before in many parts of the world. Usually it is best to establish these methods of communication before you go overseas.

4) Try to maintain the basic elements of your family's regular routine (e.g., mealtime, playtime, family devotions, celebrations, bedtime rituals, chores, discipline, etc.). This helps provide some stability in times of change.

5) Plan to take some familiar things with you and allow your kids to do the same. Pictures and knick knacks



can help make your new house a home. A stuffed animal or favorite toy can help your kids adjust to their new surroundings.

6) Give each person opportunity and time to say appropriate good-byes to the people, places, and things that are significant to them. Be prepared for feelings of loss and grief associated with these farewells. Also include reconciliation of hurts or restoration of broken relationships if necessary. Although this may be painful, it is imperative not to leave any such "unfinished business" behind.

7) Plan for the educational future of your children. Investigate the school options available and the entry requirements at the school you are planning to use. Keep your child's post-high-school education plans in mind in the choices you make. If at all possible, plan your moves when they will cause the least possible disruption in your child's education. Discuss your plans with trusted educators and be open to their input and suggestions.

8) Recognize and acknowledge God's love and faithfulness in the midst of the changes. Transitions can provide wonderful opportunities for spiritual growth and strengthened family relationships as you learn to depend on the Lord and each other in new ways.

Changes in life are inevitable. They can be as simple as a new pair of shoes or as complex as a move overseas. In each transition it is important to remember that God is in control and that He will lead you through. Flexibility and a sense of humor are also great assets. Transitions don't seem to get easier with practice, but what you learn from each experience may help you face the next one with greater confidence and give you the opportunity to encourage others along the way!

### Resources to Help Families with Transitions

Following are a few of the resources available to help families prepare for and move through the transition experience, whether leaving the home country for a field assignment or leaving the field for the home country.

#### Games/Activities

Rookies–An Activity Handbook for Families Going to the Mission Field, Daniel Barth Peters, Link Care Center, 1985. Contains a variety of games, activities, and worksheets for the family to do together as they prepare to go overseas. It is especially suitable for families with school-aged children. Order from Link Care Center, 1734 W. Shaw, Fresno, CA 93711. 209-439-5920

*Transitions*, a conversation-starter card game developed by CHED-FS and Barnabas International to help families communicate about their transition experience. One version is meant to be used in preparation for leaving and the other one after you are in the new location. It was developed with furlough in mind, but the questions can be applied or adapted to fit other transitions as well. Available through the CHED-FS office in Dallas. May be duplicated for nonprofit use.

#### Books for Children

- A Country Far Away, Nigel Gray & Philippe Dupasquier, Orchard Books, 1991. \$5.56 A children's book with dual illustrations on each page for a one-line text about typical childhood experiences. One illustration is set in North America and the other in a third world village. The vocabulary is simple enough for young readers. It can be used as an effective tool to discuss how life may be different in the new environment. In its simplicity the book is a powerful illustration of how much our experience influences the meaning we ascribe to words and can help us understand how easy it is to miscommunicate when interacting with those who have had different experiences.
- Alexander, Who's Not (Do you hear me? I mean it!) Going to Move, Judith Viorst, Alladin Paperbacks, 1980. \$3.99 This book takes Alexander from not wanting to move to being willing to leave. It is really recommended only to those who have a child struggling emotionally with a move.

Transitions, continued on page 3

# Transitions, continued from page 2

Good-bye, House, Ann Banks and Nancy Evans, Harmony Books, 1980. \$10.00 This book supplies a child with a place to write personal feelings and information about their move. There are pages for remembering the old, tracing the move, and recording the new. It includes a brief parents' guide in the back of the book.

- Harold & Stanley Say Good-bye, Jill Dyer, MK Merimna, 1998. \$8.00 A book written at a young child's level to help them understand what it means to be a missionary and what is involved in preparing to go overseas. Suitable for preschoolers or early primary level. Order through MK Merimna, PO Box 205, Mitcham Shopping Centre, Torrens Park SA 5062, Australia.
- Where in the World Are You Going?, Judith M. Blohm, Intercultural Press, 1996. \$9.95 An entertaining activity book that helps young children, ages five to ten, through the process of moving abroad. Older children could do some of the activities independently but will benefit more from them if there is interaction with parents and other family members.

Don't Pig Out on Junk Food: The MK's Guide to Survival in the U.S., Alma Daughtery Gordon, **Evangelical Missions Information** Service, 1993. \$12.95 The author is a fourth generation MK and mother of six adult MKs. The book offers valuable insights from experienced MKs to help others make a successful reentry to the United States. It begins with family preparation before departure and includes practical advice and suggestions about education, money, work, social adjustments, and personal issues, as well as information about available resources. Each chapter concludes with questions for reflection and discussion. (Teens)

#### Books for Adults

- Cross-Cultural Reentry: A Book of Readings, Clyde Austin, Abilene Christian University, 1986. \$14.95 A compilation of articles contributed by various authors addressing numerous issues and giving practical suggestions for successful reentry to the United States after an extended time in another culture. This resource can be used as a guide in group discussions.
- Furlough & The Missionary Child. A booklet produced by CHED-FS, available at no charge to SIL members through the Dallas CHED-FS office. It contains practical suggestions for families with school-aged children preparing for furlough. Planning ahead can help make furlough a more positive experience.

Living Overseas: A Book of Preparations, Ted Ward, The Free Press-MacMillan Publishing, 1984. \$19.96 Drawing on a wealth of experience, the author gives sound advice on a variety of topics associated with adjusting to life in a new culture. Whatever the topic, Ward approaches it positively with wit and lively vignettes that illuminate social, cultural, and religious differences around the world.

Raising Resilient MKs: Resources for Caregivers, Parents, and Teachers, Joyce M. Bowers, Editor. ACSI, Colorado Springs, 1998. \$12.00 A comprehensive one-volume collection of articles by different authors reflecting the most current thinking on a wide variety of topics dealing with the nurture and education of "missionary kids." One chapter specifically focuses on transitions both to the field and back to the home country. Order through CHED-FS Dallas.

- Re-entry: Making the Transition From Missions to Life at Home, Peter Jordan, YWAM Publishing, 1992. \$6.39 An excellent resource for returning missionaries, as well as mission committees and church members, to help ease the often painful transition from field to home country.
- Sojourners: The Family on the Move-A Book of Resources, Ruth & Samuel Rowen. Assoc. of Urbanus, 1990. \$15.95 The authors are missionary parents of three adult children. This book is not merely to be read but to be worked through as a whole family. Though written for those planning to move overseas, many of the exercises provide practical suggestions for developing a healthy family, whether moving or not. E-mail: SamRowen@compuserve.com.
- Strangers at Home, Carolyn D. Smith, Editor, Aletheia Publications. \$15.95 Essays on the effects of living overseas and coming "home" to a strange land. This anthology presents varied perspectives on the effects of living overseas and coming "home" to a country that seems just as strange as the one left behind. It includes useful advice for parents seeking to help their children-especially teenagers-cope with reentry to their passport country. Order through Aletheia Publications, 46 Bell Hollow Rd., Putnam Valley, NY 10579, Attn. Guy J. Smith. E-mail: alethpub@aol.com.

Most books can be ordered through the Internet at www.amazon.com unless otherwise noted. (There is a minimum of \$3.95 shipping and handling charge for U.S. orders.)  $\Delta$ 









= a recently added title © 1998 Children's Software Revue

These are our top choices from the Children's Software Revue database (containing 3482 titles to date) as of June 15, 1998. Based on past reviews and our knowledge of the software market, we consider each to be a great addition to any software library. The date in parentheses indicates when the title was first listed.

# Preschool

# Early Elementary (Gr. K-2)

#### Language

- All Dogs Go to Heaven Activity Center by MGM Interactive, 800-646-5808, \$29.95, ages 3-8, Windows or Mac (Nov. '97)
- Arthur's Reading Race by Brøderbund, 800-776-4724, \$29.95, ages 3-7, Windows or Mac (Feb. '97)
- My First Incredible, Amazing Words and Pictures by DK Multimedia, 888-342-5357 \$29.95, ages 4-7, Windows or Mac (Jul. '98)

#### Early Math& Logic

- Disney Ready for Math With Pooh by Disney Interactive, 800-900-9234, \$35.00, ages 3-6, Windows or Mac (Jan. '98)
- Freddi Fish 3: The Case of the Stolen Conch Shell by Humongous Entertainment, 800-499-8386, \$29.95, ages 3-8, Windows or Mac (Mar. 98)
- Putt-Putt Saves the Zoo by Humongous Entertainment, 800-499-8386, \$39.95, ages 3-8, Windows or Mac (Jun. '97)

#### All Purpose

- Fisher-Price Ready for Learning: Toddler by Davidson & Associates, Inc., 800-545-7677, \$30.00, ages 18 mo.-3 years, Windows or Mac (Jan. '98)
- Reader Rabbit's Kindergarten by The Learning Company, 800-227-5609, \$30.00, ages ages 4-6, Windows or Mac (Jan. '98)
- Reader Rabbit's Toddler 2.0 by The Learning Company, 800-227-5609, \$30.00, ages 1.5 to 3, Windows or Mac (Jul. '98)

#### Art & Creativity

Learn 'n Sketch by CalComp (peripheral), 800-992-9549, \$69.00, ages 2-7, Windows or Mac (Jan. '98)

#### Quote to Note:

"I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide them the conditions in which they can learn."

Albert Einstein (1879-1955), Physicist

To Subscribe to CSR call 1-800-993-9499 in US or 908-284-0404 or write Children's Software Revue, 44 Main Street, Flemigton, NJ 08822

### Reading

- Let's Go Read! An Island Adventure by Edmark, 800-362-2890, \$45.00, ages 4-6, Windows or Mac (Jan. '98)
- Reading Blaster: Ages 4-6 by Davidson & Associates, Inc., 800-545-7677 \$30.00, ages 4-6, Windows or Mac (Nov. '97)
- Writing & Creativity
- Ariel's Story Studio by Disney Interactive, 800-900-9234, \$35.00, ages 6-10, Windows or Mac (Jan. '98)
- Orly's Draw-A-Story by Brøderbund, 800-521-6263, \$29.95, ages 8-up, Windows or Mac (Feb. '97)

Jumpstart Typing by Knowledge Adventure, 800-542-4240, \$30.00, ages 7-10, Windows or Mac (Jan. '98)

#### Math and Logic

- Disney's MathQuest with Aladdin by Disney Interactive, 800-900-9234, \$35, ages 6-9, Windows or Mac (Nov. '97)
- Gordi and The Math Invaders by Compedia, 602-547-8612, ages 5-9, Windows (May '98)
- Young Dilbert Hi-Tech Hijinks by KnowWonder, 888-566-9637, \$24, ages 5-up Windows or Mac (May '98)

#### Science & Social Studies

- I Can Be an Animal Doctor/Veterinarian, by Educational Insights 800-995-4436 \$34.95, ages 6-10, Windows or Mac (Sept. '97)
- Create & Play Safari, by Cloud 9 Interactive, 888-662-5683, \$24.95, ages 5-12, Windows or Mac (Jan. '98)
- My Amazing Human Body, by DK Multimedia, 800-356-6575, \$29.95, ages 6-10, Windows or Mac (Jan. '98)

#### All Purpose

- Big Thinkers Series (Kindergarten & First Grade), by Humongous, 800-499-8386 \$29.95 per title, ages 4-8, Windows or Mac (Nov. '97)
- Fisher-Price Ready for School-First Grade by Davidson, 800-545-7677, \$30, ages 5-7, Windows or Mac (Jan. '98)
- I Spy CD-ROM, by Scholastic, Inc, 800-541-5513, \$29.00, ages 5-9, Windows or Mac (Nov. (97)
- JumpStart Kindergarten 98, by Knowledge Adventure, 800-542-4240, \$30.00, ages 5-6, Windows or Mac (Mar. '98)
- JumpStart First Grade, by Knowledge Adventure, 800-542-4240, \$30.00, ages 5-7, Windows or Mac (Mar. '98)
- Reader Rabbit's 2nd Grade, by The Learning Co, 800-716-8506, \$29.95, ages 6-8, Windows or Mac (May '98)

# Older Children (Gr. 3-8)

#### **Reading, Writing & Languages**

- Carmen Sandiego Word Detective by Broderbund, 800-521-6263, \$38.00, ages 8-12, Windows or Mac, (Jan. '98)
- Spanish for the Real World by Davidson, 800-545-7677, \$30.00, ages 10-up, Windows or Mac (Jul. '98)
- Microsoft Creative Writer 2 by Microsoft, 800-426-9400, \$34.95, ages 8-up, Windows (Note: 16 MB RAM recommended) (Oct. '96)

#### Math & Logic

- Carmen Sandiego Math Detective by Brøderbund, 800-521-6263, \$34.95, ages 8-14, Windows or Mac (Mar. 98).
- The ClueFinders' 3rd Grade Adventures by The Learning Company, 800-227-5609,
- \$29.99, ages 7-9, Windows or Mac (Jan. '98) Smart Games Puzzle Challenge 2 by Smart Games, Inc., 800-788-8815, \$29.95, ages 10up, Windows (Jan. '98).

#### **Geography & History**

- Byzantine: The Betraval by The Discovery Channel, 800-678-3343, \$49.00 ages 12-up, Windows (Jan. '98)
- Carmen Sandiego Series (USA, World, Time) by Brøderbund, 800-521-6263, \$38.00 /title, ages 9-up, Windows or Mac (Nov. '97)
- Eyewitness History of the World 2.0, by DK Multimedia, 800-356-6575, \$39.95, ages 8-up, Windows (Jul. '98)

#### Science

- Evolution of Man by Expert, 800-759-2562, \$14.99, ages 10-up, Windows or Mac (May (98)
- SimSafari by Maxis, 800-336-2947, \$29.95, ages 8-up, Windows or Mac (May '98)
- ZAP! by Edmark, 800-362-2890, \$29.95, ages 8-12, Windows or Mac (Jul. '98)

#### Creativity

- Flying Colors 2 by Magic Mouse Productions, 415-669-7010, \$37.00, 6-up, Windows or Mac (Mar. 98).
- Print Artist Platinum by Sierra On-Line, 800-757-7707, \$49.95, Windows or Mac, ages 10up (Nov. '97)

#### Reference

- Britannica Internet Guide (www.ebig.com) Encyclopedia Britannica, 800-747-8503, ages 9-up (Nov. '97)
- Microsoft Encarta Reference Suite 98 by Microsoft Corp., 800-426-9400, \$109, ages 9up, Windows (Jul. '98)

#### Just For Fun

MotoRacer by Electronic Arts, 800-245-4525, ages 8-up, Windows (Jul. '98)

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PTO Mail Bag

# Where is home?

by Dora Pauls

We were in the middle of selling our house, moving to a temporary place to live, packing crates to send ahead to our first overseas assignment, and generally feeling quite uprooted when our two-year-old son stumped us with the question, "Where is home?" The many moves and transitions over the years have only added to the complexity of finding an answer to that question. It has also provided opportunity for creativity.

When our children were small, we tried to help give them a sense of "home" through familiar objects that were easily transported—like a small pillow or favorite toy to cuddle when going to sleep. As they got older, they added a personal touch to their "space" by putting up favorite posters, pictures, etc. During high school, the same son who at two had asked "Where is home?" came up with his own creative idea of how to feel "at home" wherever his moves might take him.

At the high school he was attending there was a custom of "bequeathing" some article of clothing to the friend you were leaving behind when you said good-bye at graduation. One particular "treasure" our son inherited from a

# A Chain of Eventual Events

#### by Diane Lilleberg

The anticipation of special celebrations can add frustration to the complexity of time for children. I have a picture of our son along with three of his cousins at a New Year's Day family reunion. We spent the day together in a facility that included a swimming pool. The picture is a clear reminder that all four boys were a little strained in the patience department and a bit goofier than was normal, even for them, as they waited for time to swim. The picture is also evidence of my own strain in the patience department, as my watch is fastened through the buttonhole of my son's shirt.

Although anticipation reminds us that children understand enough about the occasions we celebrate to look forward to them, I'm sure I am not the only parent driven nuts with endless *whens* and *how longs* that can never be answered adequately. One year when my kids were about four and six, I saw an idea using a simple paper chain and adapted it. It was one of those rare times when desperate frustration leads to something that actually works.

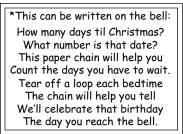
Each child cut out a simple paper shape that represented the anticipated event in some way. We then added a paper chain link for each day between the day we made the chain and the event our children were sure was stuck forever in the mystery we call the future (or even more confusing variations on the future like two weeks from Thursday). good friend was a well-worn pair of jeans complete with tattered hem and numerous holes. He also had a special shirt he received as a gift from his older brother.

The jeans and the shirt became the "body" of an ever-changing "portrait" on his wall. To these he added memorabilia of every sort and description to remind him of people, places, and experiences that had special meaning to him. It became his own personal "story board" that went with him from high school to every room he had during college.

When we were commenting about his unique wall decoration on one of our visits to his dorm room, he answered the question he had asked us so many years ago, "When I hang that up, I'm home!!"  $\Delta$ 

Each night at bedtime, our kids would tear off one link of their chain. Although telling them the number of days were fewer did little to convince them there was any progress being made, seeing the chain get shorter gave them a sense of time passing and the event getting closer.

I was happy enough to have resolved the problem with a fun project that didn't require a large time investment, but it was months before I lost the glow from a miraculous unexpected benefit. Whenever a paper chain was in progress on upcoming events, my kids were willing to go to bed right after our evening meal just to get to tear off a new strip!  $\Delta$ 





Note: An article in the November 1998 issue, "Putting Geography Back Into the Curriculum," discussed the standards for teaching geography being implemented in United States schools. This follow-up article provides only a sampling of many resources from which to choose. Listed book prices (if available) are from www.amazon.com and are provided for information purposes.

#### A Guide for Parents

U. S. Department of Education. *Helping Your Child Learn Geography*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 1996. (Available on the Internet at *www. ed.gov/pubs/parents/Geography*)

#### **Books for Young Readers**

- Pat Brisson. *Magic Carpet*. Bradbury, 1991.
- Nigel Gray. *A Country Far Away*. Orchard Books, 1991. (paperback \$5.56) See page 2.
- Gail Hartman. As the Crow Flies: A First Book of Maps. Turtleback, 1993. (\$11.95)
- Nila K. Leigh. Learning to Swim in Swaziland: A Child's Eye-View of a Southern African Country. Scholastic, 1993. Scholastic, P.O. Box 7502, Jefferson City, MO 65102, 1-800-325-6149.
- Anita Lobel. *Away from Home*. Greenwillow, 1994. (\$11.20)
- Marjorie Priceman. *How to Make an Apple Pie and See the World.* Knopf, 1994. (\$11.20) Peter Spier. *People*. Doubleday,
- 1988. (paperback \$8.76)

# Resources for Parents

# Resources for Teaching Geography

#### **Books for Older Readers**

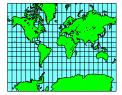
William Pene DuBois. *The Twentyone Balloons*. Viking, 1986. (paperback \$3.99)

Jean Fritz. Around the World in a Hundred Years: From Henry the Navigator to Magellan. Putnam, 1998. (paperback \$5.59)

Susan Ryan. Coming to America: The Story of Immigration. Scholastic, 1996.

#### Atlases and Informational Guides

James Harrison and Eleanor Van Zandt. The Young People's Atlas of the United States.



Kingfisher, 1996. (\$13.97) Keith Lye. *The Complete Atlas of the World*. Raintree Steck-Vaughn, 1995. (\$37.11)

National Geographic Picture Atlas of Our World. National Geographic Society, 1994. (\$17.50) Dinah Starkey. Scholastic Atlas of Exploration. Scholastic, 1994.

#### Free or Inexpensive Materials

Maps are available from many sources, at little or no cost. Most U.S. states have maps and information kits available through their departments of tourism. Foreign countries often have tourist agencies that will furnish maps and guides. The U.S. Government Printing Office (Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954) has hundreds of maps available.

#### **Magazines for Children**

- *Discover*, produced by Family Media, Inc., \$15.97 (12 issues) in U.S.; \$30.97 international. Discover, 114 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011, 1-800-829-9132.
- *Faces*, published by Cobblestone Publishing, Inc., 1 year (9 issues) \$26.95 (outside U.S. add \$8.00 per year). Cobblestone Pub., 30 Grove Street, Suite C, Peterborough, NH 03458, 1-800-821-0115.
- Ranger Rick and Your Big Backyard, published by the National Wildlife Federation, RR—\$17.00 U.S. (12 issues), \$26.00 outside U.S.; YBB—\$15.00 U.S. (12 issues), \$24.00 outside U.S. Order both from National Wildlife Federation, 8925 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, VA 22184, 1-800-588-1650.
- *World*, published by the National Geographic Society, \$17.95 U.S., \$27.00 outside U.S. National Geographic Society, P.O. Box 11303, Des Moines, IA 50340, 1-800-437-5521.

#### **Internet Resources**

Mapquest: www.mapquest.com NASA's Earth Science Enterprise: www.hq.nasa.gov/office/mtpe National Geographic Society: www.nationalgeographic.com National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution: www.nmnh.si.edu National Weather Service: www.nws.noaa.gov U.S. Geological Survey Learning Web: www.usgs.gov/education

#### **Computer Software and CD-ROMS**

New titles and updated versions of older titles are released at a rapid rate. See *Children's Software Revue*, whose "All Star Software" is reprinted in the *PTO*. They also have a website at *childrenssoftware.com*.  $\Delta$ 

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 Managing Editor: Wayne D. Lance, Ed.D.
 Layout: Lynée Ward

 Address correspondence to : 7500 W. Camp Wisdom Road, Dallas, TX 75236-5899
 Phone: (972) 708-7312
 FAX: (972) 708-7311

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