

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mary E. Hall

Phone: 215-249-0100, x119

Fax: 215-249-9657

Email: mhall@pearlsbuck.org

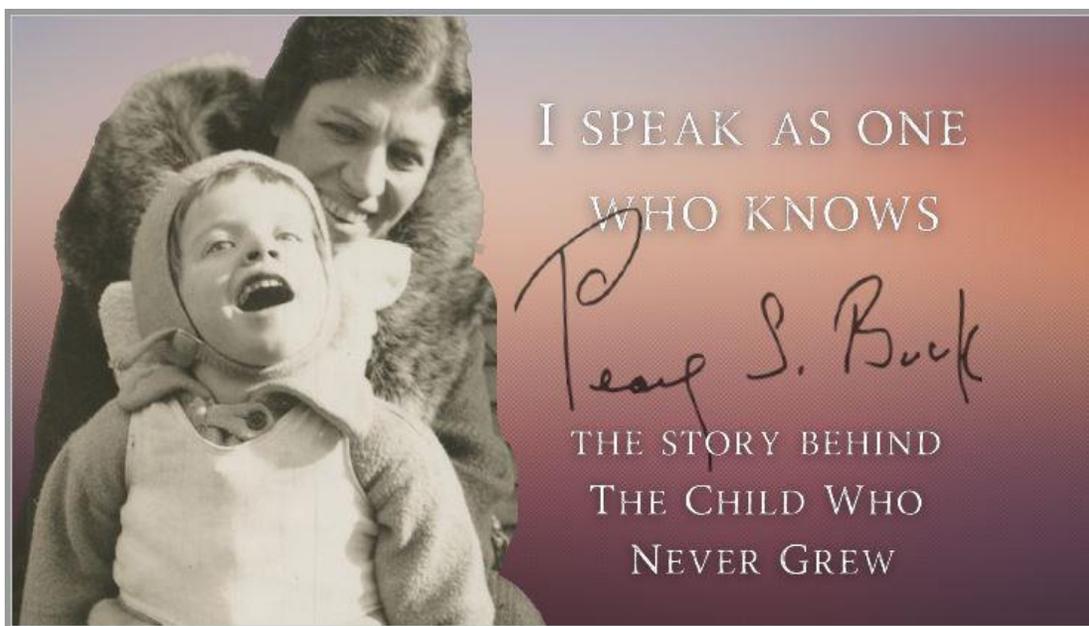


[Hilltown, PA] FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 20, 2020

Pearl S. Buck International Unveils New Virtual Exhibit

“I Speak as One Who Knows: The Story Behind *The Child Who Never Grew*”



Pearl S. Buck International is launching this week a new virtual exhibit on its website, “I Speak as One Who Knows: The Story Behind *The Child Who Never Grew*.”

Pearl S. Buck was a Nobel and Pulitzer Prize-winning author, avid humanitarian, and ardent social justice activist. Buck used her writing and celebrity to shine a light on many issues facing society, including women’s rights, racial injustice, and the plight of marginalized children living in poverty around the world. One of the lesser known causes for which she advocated was the rights of the differently-abled. This cause was near and dear to Pearl Buck’s heart, as it was something that personally affected her own family. Buck’s only

biological child, Carol, was born in China in 1920. Though she appeared healthy at birth, she was born with phenylketonuria (PKU), an inherited metabolic disease. If left untreated, it leads to profound intellectual disabilities. At the time of Carol's birth, both the illness and the treatment were unknown. Carol was not diagnosed with PKU until adulthood, and thus experienced a life-long intellectual disability. She grew up in the Vineland Training School in New Jersey with other differently-abled children and adults, and Pearl Buck used her writing in part to support Carol's care.

In a time when families experiencing and raising differently-abled children was not only not talked about, but often actively hidden from the world, Pearl Buck wrote about Carol and her experience as the mother of a differently-abled child in *The Child Who Never Grew*, published in 1950 to great acclaim. Her inspiring account of her struggle to help and understand her daughter was one of the first public disclosures of its kind from a public figure. Throughout her life, Buck advocated for the care, treatment, research into, understanding, and acceptance of not only Carol, but all children and families in their same situation. This exhibit highlights Pearl S. Buck's journey as a mother of a differently-abled child, her advocacy for all differently-abled children, and how American society's view and treatment of people with intellectual disabilities evolved from the 19th century to today.

"In no small part because of Carol, Pearl Buck developed and supported programs to help other children in need with developmental disabilities," explained Marie Toner, curator of the Pearl S. Buck House National Historic Landmark and all of Pearl S. Buck International's exhibits. As Pearl Buck described in *The Child Who Never Grew*, "Carol taught her mother that the world is made up of all different kinds of people, with different talents and needs, all of whom deserve the same access to opportunity. This profoundly personal experience helped shape Pearl Buck's passionate belief that all children and all people, no matter their differences, deserve love, care and respect."

As COVID-19 restrictions remain in place, Pearl S. Buck International, like other organizations, has had to find new and innovative ways to continue to keep its constituents engaged and share its work and mission as well as the humanitarian, cross-cultural, and activist legacy of its founder, Pearl S. Buck. This new exhibit joins the organization's first virtual offering, "Pearl S. Buck Taking Action: Civil Rights in America", which was launched

over the summer. Virtual exhibits allow supporters and the community to not only experience Pearl Buck's legacy from the comfort and safety of their own home, but also removes the geographic limits of viewing exhibits in person. It is the hope of Pearl S. Buck International that these virtual exhibits will reach and inspire more people than ever before with Pearl Buck's story, allowing them to embrace and engage in her continuing legacy.

"I Speak as One Who Knows: The Story Behind *The Child Who Never Grew*" can be viewed now at <https://pearlsbuck.org/exhibit-gallery/exhibits>.

~

Pearl S. Buck International® provides opportunities to explore and appreciate other cultures, builds better lives for children around the globe and promotes the legacy of our founder by preserving and interpreting her National Historic Landmark Home.

- END -