



**CARING HOMES
FOR ORPHAN CHILDREN**

HOMeward BOUND

The Caring Homes for Orphan Children
Newsletter



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Toronto Seminar/Reunion a Success!

CHOC's March 30th day-long adoption event at the Holiday Inn Toronto-Markham was a very positive experience for some 200 participants.

The morning information session focused on the interests of parents-to-be considering adoption from Russia. Featured speakers included Arnie Gotfryd, founder and director of Caring Homes for Orphan Children; social worker Marie Artt, and Dr. Valeri Kogan, renowned expert on Russian orphanage children.

Especially enlightening were the candid narratives and multi-media presentations by four adoptive families who kindly shared their adoption experiences with the group. Special thanks go to Adele and Malcolm Buck, Lucie and Phil King, Tamara and Dr. Brian Goldman, and Maureen and Randy Roe for their participation.

During the buffet luncheon, adoptive families, resource people, and preadopters were able to network and discuss things on a more personal basis.

Meanwhile, the children had a wonderful time with the indoor Fun Fair supplied for the occasion by Hart Entertainment. The younger children enjoyed the various inflatables, activity centers, and clown while the older children challenged each other to soccer kicks, basketball shots, foosball, and carnival games.

All the children gathered to sing and wish a Happy Birthday to Casey MacKay whose 7th birthday happened to fall on this day.

We were fortunate to have received very favourable media coverage by several Toronto area newspapers and a long spot on CFTO news. It was a much welcomed happy story in contrast to much of the media coverage of intercountry adoption.



Photo courtesy of the Toronto Star

Listservs: An Excellent Resource

Internet Listservs are an excellent way for people with common interests to share information and get answers on any issue. CHOC participates in 9 Yahoo Listservs.

For those interested in adopting, you can follow and participate in discussions with parents-to-be, parents and resource people. The following are popular adoption listservs for Canadians:

Adoption_Canada
Canada_Adoption_International
Canadiansadopting
InfertilityNetwork
Ont_Int'l_Adoption

It's actually not difficult to join such groups. Go to www.yahoo.com - Groups - New User - and then add the above groups. We opt to receive the "digest" format, which is a more efficient way to keep up to date.

One of our recent postings to these Listservs was entitled: "*Should Canada Switch to Apostille?*" (April 13th, 2003) We discussed the benefits of Canada opting in to the international convention on the legalization of documents in order to streamline the adoption process to save months of time and thousands of dollars in adoption costs.



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The responses we received have directed us to unexpected resources and issues that will help us determine if and how to proceed with lobbying on this issue.

Health Matters ~ Attachment

Children adopted from institutional settings are special in that they may have experienced neglect, abandonment, and multiple changes in caregivers. As a result, the potential for attachment related problems with orphanage children, although low, is higher than average.

Many institutionalized children do not suffer from attachment issues or disorders. In the large majority of cases, the adopted child will bond fully with their adoptive parents, at their own pace. The pace of progress of attachment is influenced by such factors as the child's nature and character, early experiences, and the quality and quantity of attention and stimulation both in the orphanage and in the child's new home.

Attachment has been defined as a "reciprocal process by which an emotional connection develops between an infant and his primary caretaker. It shapes how the child will relate to the world, learn, and form relationships throughout life." (*quote from The Natural Child by Jan Hunt ~ this book is highly acclaimed by Mothering Magazine*)

An attachment disorder is considered a "condition in which individuals have difficulty forming loving, lasting, intimate relationships". (*Institute for Attachment*)

You should consult your pediatrician if your child persistently exhibits the following symptoms:

- An inability to give or receive affection.
- Lack of cause-and-effect thinking.
- Inability to empathize with others or feel remorse.

- Cheating, lying, and stealing.
- Manipulating others.

There are many ways parents can help their children bond and build attachment: Some include:

- Eye contact, smiling
- Floor time, interactive play
- Holding hands while walking.
- Holding, hugging, kissing.
- Massaging child's feet or back

Much more information and practical advice can be found at:

www.instituteforattachment.org
www.naturalchild.org

Recipe from Russia

Mushroom Borscht

- 1 lb meat for stock
- 8 cups water
- 2 cups dried mushrooms
- 1 bunch beets
- 1 small cabbage
- 1 Tbs. tomato paste
- 1/2 tsp. sugar
- 1/8 cup vinegar
- 2 Tbs. oil
- 1 cup sour cream (or non-dairy substitute)
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2 Tbs. chopped parsley

Wash mushrooms and soak in water for several hours. In a pan, put in grated beet, tomato paste, add some water and cook covered.

Add shredded cabbage, carrots, onions and cook until done. Add beet. Season to taste and bring to boil. Serve with sour cream and chopped parsley.



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Travel Tips

To get the most out of your trip to Russia, schedule your sightseeing in advance. In the case of a one trip process, you will have 10-14 days free in the middle.

In the two trip process, the best timing is to take in the sights on the first trip, after you have seen your child several times and completed the medical evaluation and paperwork. That way instead of rushing back from a high-paced Russian adventure to your high paced daily routine, you will get a much needed break to unwind, take in your child's native culture, and celebrate your great expectations. After all who knows when you will next get a holiday without the kid(s)?

May in Russia

May 1st and 2nd is the International **Labour Day and Spring Festival in Russia**. On this day singing and fireworks take place to honour workers and the arrival of spring. **May 9th** is **Victory Day**. To commemorate the end of the Second World War flowers are laid at war memorials and a minute of silence is observed.

Upcoming Events

The FACE Eastern European Adoption Support Group is having an Open House on **May 1st** at 8 pm at 23 Vinci Crescent, North York. Discussion group for pre and post adopters.

In an early effort to celebrate Mother's Day, the Association for Research on Mothering (ARM) is holding a conference on **May 3rd** and **May 4th** at York University. The conference looks at various aspects of the relationship between mothers and work. For more information call: (416) 736-2100 (x60366) or e-mail: arm@yorku.ca

The play "*Home is My Road*", written by Florence Gibson will play at the Toronto Factory Theatre until **May 11th**. The play highlights a Canadian woman's international adoption experience. (*The play has a negative spin and is not for kids*). Call (416) 504-9971.

The Adoption Council of Ontario is holding a "*How to Adopt/Getting Started in Adoption*" Workshop in Toronto on **May 8th** and again on **May 31st**. The same workshop will also be held in London on **May 24th**. Info (416) 482-0021 or aco@adoption.ca.

The Rosedale United Church is holding the "*Summer Picnic*" for all adoptive and pre-adoptive families and is scheduled for **May 25th** in a central Toronto area (location to be announced). For more information call: (416) 964-0042

A new support group for adoptive parents has been formed in London, Ontario. Parents who have adopted locally or internationally are encouraged to join. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, **May 13th** at 6:30 P.M., One London Place, 255 Queens Avenue, 22nd Floor, London. Contact Leanne Beattie at (519) 652-7615, or e-mail: creativelifebooks@rogers.com.

On **June 7th**, Sofie Stergianis of the International Adoption Centre will be hosting an in-depth educational seminar for parents adopting internationally. This full-day seminar, to be held in Toronto, is a very valuable supplement to the services provided by your Agency and your homestudy social worker. Contact sofie@ica.net or (416) 483-0003.

