



**CARING HOMES
FOR ORPHAN CHILDREN**

HOMeward BOUND

The Caring Homes for Orphan Children
Newsletter



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Russian Adoption Workshop in Waterloo

Caring Homes for Orphan Children (CHOC) hosted a Russian adoption workshop at the Waterloo Memorial Recreation Complex on Sunday, November 30th. The meeting was jointly organized by CHOC and Waterloo adoption practitioner, Marcy Lemon-Lawrence. Her clientele made up much of the crowd.

Around fifty people were in attendance. There were some adoptive families, some parents who are waiting for a court date, some couples in the middle of a homestudy, and some just considering adoption from Russia.

Marcy worked hard to put together this wonderful afternoon. Her dedication and concern for everyone was readily apparent. She educated, enlightened and inspired us.

Leanne Beattie, an adoptive parent and publisher of Creative Life Books for adoptees gave a brief presentation. She encouraged anyone adopting from abroad to assemble all information and memorabilia from the adoptee's family and early years, including photos, letters and documents. This way, when the child gets older the adoptee has a feeling of continuity to whatever happened before. This helps bridge a gap and provides a sense of integrity and wholeness to a child's life.

For more information about these books, please see Leanne's website at www.creativelifebooks.ca.

Arnie Gotfryd, the agency director of CHOC, screened a specially prepared video and gave an overview of the process. He spoke about the conditions in the orphanages, the health evaluations of the children and a comparison of the pros and cons of adopting in the six Russian regions where CHOC is currently active. Four adoptive families were on hand to relate their experiences and take questions from the audience:

John and Kendra H. adopted Sophia from the Moscow region in the first part of 2001; Roland and Linda S. adopted Jason in the spring of 2001 from the Kudymkar region (a rural area near the mountains) and then Jemma two years later from the same orphanage.

Kathy M. gave a more recent perspective. She adopted Niki this past September, also from Kudymkar. More fresh impressions were provided by Maureen and Andrew N. who just arrived home from Ekaternberg in November with little Bailee.



Maureen & Bailee: Love at First Sight



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New Changes and Faces at CHOC

After many dedicated years of service, our program coordinator, **Lidia Vidmont**, has moved on to a new

position in Montreal. Her compassion, integrity, attentiveness, and capable performance have been appreciated by clients and colleagues alike. We will miss her, and we wish her well in her new location.

Taking over as program coordinator is **Leah Groysman** (pronounced Lee-ah). She will be responsible for the day-to-day case management for our clients. Also joining our office is **Anna Kharkhourin** as Public Relations Coordinator. Their skills and experience make them eminently well suited to their new positions. Staying on are **Arnie Gotfryd**, agency founder and Executive Director, and **Leah Rosen-Gotfryd** (pronounced Lay-ah), as Post-Placement Coordinator.



E-mailing Photos from Russia

A good idea for emailing photos from Russia is to bring a card reader along with your camera. Card readers plug onto a computer's USB port and read the memory device from you camera.

Make sure you get a reader that is compatible with your camera's memory (there are 3 types: memory stick, compact flash and SD).

You can use the hotel's PC in its business centre. It is a great way to share pictures immediately. If you don't bring your own laptop, remember to bring the software that comes with the reader.

(From an internet posting)



Adoption Training ~ London Area

The Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services has issued new directives

strongly encouraging applicants to educate themselves on adoption issues. This is above and beyond the services provided by the practitioners in the homestudy and by agencies in their facilitation services.

London area practitioners held a seminar on November 8, 2003 at Windermere Manor in London. From the evaluations completed by registrants it was a great success. They have scheduled another training day for February 14, 2004 for applicants interested in international adoption. For more information, contact Elly Freund-Bell in London at 519-675-0362 or by email at danny.bell@sympatico.ca.

Late Breaking News: CHOC to Open Bulgaria Program

Tzivos Hashem Canada, operating as Caring Homes for Orphan Children, has just been licensed by the Ontario government to facilitate adoptions from Bulgaria. Sorry, no details or applications before mid-January 2004.



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Will My Child be Healthy?

We all want the best for our children, and of course good health plays a primary role in the overall wellbeing of a child.

We can't know for sure what will be in store for us; not for ourselves, our parents or our children.

We do know that Russian orphans, are very well cared for in the baby homes and orphanages by dedicated and capable staff doctors and nurses. In the great majority of Russian orphanages today, the children are receiving adequate nutrition, clean conditions, decent medical care, and a fair degree of social stimulation and fresh air in seasonal attire. Moreover, the regional governments have medical specialists that make the rounds and provide extra care for children in need.

Any adoptive parent can only bring home a child after having a Canadian-approved medical specialist examine the potential adoptee according to strict western medical standards.

The adoptive parent will also have access, while in Russia, to the child's complete medical and social history as this record is kept at the orphanage.

It has been our experience that some 90% of our Russian adoptees are now in the normal range of health. Of the remaining 10%, only about half have serious problems, and the parents have usually known about the issues before choosing to adopt.

Interestingly enough it is the parents of this ~5% that feel uniquely blessed by being able to give their chosen child the best possible chance to overcome or at least adjust to his or her special challenges in life.

The biggest fear among adoptive applicants for Russia is fetal alcohol syndrome. Most of these cases are detectable in young children in a variety of ways. Sometimes however, this condition or the more subtle fetal alcohol effects, is impossible to diagnose in infants or even toddlers. Where there is a suspicion, there are new tests which are done on hair samples which, although not always accurate, can provide an extra measure of confidence in those borderline cases.

We need to remember that certain illnesses are developmental and cannot be detected or predicted even in biological children. Sadly, we all know perfectly healthy parents who have a child with a serious illness.

Most of our adopted children from Russia have turned out to be bright, athletic, psychologically sound, and socially well adjusted and have bonded well in their new homes.

May G-d grant good health to all His children.



December Birthdays

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY
TO:**

Elena H. on your 13th
bday Dec. 9;
Emily C. on your 5th
bday Dec. 11;

Adam M. December 12 on your 5th birthday
Eric L. December 20 on your 7th birthday
Rachel P December 23 on your 2nd birthday
Joseph & Victoria Dec. 25 on your 7th birthdays
Rachel S. December 25 on your 6th birthday
Jonathan C. December 27 on your 2nd birthday

